St. John's Retail Core Area Design Study

A design report into desirable physical improvements for a part of the retail core commonly known as TheGeorge Street Area but including Water Street and Harbour Drive between Bishop's Cove and Beck's Cove.

Prepared for:
The City of St. John's

by Philip Pratt, Architect
Frederick Hann Associates Ltd.
Structural Consultants Ltd.

August 1985

Executive Summary

Overview

In most Canadian cities there has been a concerted effort to redevelop the downtown core, with emphasis being placed on the user, the quality of the environment, and the utilization of the existing architectural resources.

St. John's has one of North America's oldest downtowns and some of the most interesting building forms. The retail core area presents an opportunity to realize the potential of redevelopment, a potential realized by other cities.

The area requires sensitive visual design. New structures must relate to old, renovation must maintain the original characteristics. This report develops guidelines for the renovations and new construction of buildings. Also addressed are the open space component of the area. Of high priority in this development plan is a visual upgrading of the area.

The study encompasses only part of St. John's retail core, due, in part, to the concentration of essential elements. The potential for development is strongest here, but its spread should be encouraged into other areas as well.

3. The Existing Area

The study area contains the oldest groupings of 19th century mercantile buildings to have survived the fire of 1892. Historically, the main commercial area of Water Street was to the east. Over time, businesses located to the west, where the land leveled out. George Street was a service/back street for commercial premises on the north side of Water Street and the south side of Duckworth/New Gower Streets. It was not until 1900's that George Street became a thoroughfare.

Currently, the east end of George Street can be considered as being an entertainment centre. In the near future, the study area will be flanked by some major commercial/office developments.

Observations that can be made with regards to current use of the area is as follows:

* The activity on George Street is limited to the night time and to a narrow but dedicated clientele.

* The retail function on George Street is not active as it should be.

* The harbour front's potential as an attraction is not being realized.

* O'Keefe's Grocery is doing fair business despite the fact that it is for sale.

The architecture for the area is strongly characterized by the pre-1892 Merchantile vernacular buildings, distinguished by their peaked roofs. These buildings, along with the 20th century merchantile buildings comprise the bulk of the buildings in the area. The buildings along Water Street reflect a remarkable visual cohesiveness. The architecture on George Street is more mixed. Section 5 analyses the existing architecture and identifies historically and architecturally significant buildings of the study area.

Open space is to be the unifying element in the area. Upgrading the quality of the open space is necessary to make the area as comfortable and safe for people as possible, day or night. The area's potential is directly related to the extent to which it is possible to make provisions for people to stay.

With respect to the infrastructure and services in the area the following conclusions have been made:

* The underground water and sewer lines, while old, are in serviceable condition.

* New surface drainage of 5 or 6 catch basins can be accomplished in the existing combined sanitary/storm sewer.

* Individual infill sites will have their own specific requirements.

The condition of overhead wiring is extremely poor, most visibly distracting in the open space. In general, a great deal of work is required in upgrading the normal capital work in the area.

With respect to zoning, the study area overlaps two areas: Commercial Central Mixed and Commercial Central Retail. Both allow a wide range of uses and redevelopment. The current building height limit of four storeys should be rigidly adhered to as the aspect of scale is crucial to the concept of the area. The final section of Chapter 3 deals with building code regulations and makes several suggestions with respect to the relevant regulations.

4. Concept for Development

Section presents objectives which were used to aid in the development of a concept for the study area. These objectives addressed the problems and opportunities of the study area. Generally speaking, the central idea in the proposal is to structure the area as to increase activity and make it more enjoyable. Such an environment will attract people thereby encouraging investment and hopefully improve the area, in turn attracting more people, and so on.

From the concept plan, a master plan for the area was developed. This plan shows the development of areas and, at a conceptual level, the treatment of various outdoor elements (eg. streets, sidewalks) and potential infill sites.

5. Design Development

This section is a further development of the concept plan in meeting the goals and objectives for the area.

The open space is the glue that binds the built environment together. The quality of the surroundings is significant in making provisions for people to stay. The open space elements required are dealt with in section five in detail.

There are three special projects within the open space which demand attention. They involve the creation of specific areas for people to gather or sit in an urban park-like setting.

The discussion of the open space design relates primarily to new elements which are to be introduced into the area. The architecture part of the design development primarily deals with ways of maintaining and enhancing the existing buildings. There are sections on renovation guidelines, signage, awnings, infill guidelines, sample studies of linkages, use of upper floors and a selection of possible private infill projects.

The object is to find ways within a contemporary context of maintaining and enhancing the original characteristics of the different building types in the area and suggest innovative possibilities for use of the space.

The engineering aspects associated with urban redevelopment have also been addressed in this section. Parking, underground services and overhead wiring are the three main areas that were investigated.

The elements which have been shown in the design development are ideas that need to be expanded upon in actual execution. Individually they can change but collectively they provide an image for the area.

6. Implementation

Implementation of the Retail Core Area Redevelopment Scheme and the associated realization of its benefits will be gradual and staged over a number of years. The proposals made in Section 6 come to terms with the area in a manner that respects its historic and commercial and historic designation in the Municipal Plan.

With respect to the redevelopment of the area the primary prerequisite is to establish a management structure that coordinates the efforts of the City, the Downtown Development Corporation and Mainstreet Canada.

In this study, seven areas have been designated 'Special Project Areas . These areas were selected on the basis of achieving immediate visual effect, quickly knitting the area together within a cost framework that is acceptable to the public and private sectors. Section 6 deals with the areas of priority in detail.

Development control is concerned with land uses, signage, building appearance, and their effect on people and on the core area in general. Decisions will be made against a backdrop of agreed policies and, thus, will be instrumental in securing the implementation on a day-to-day basis of those proposals contained within the development scheme.

Section 6 concludes with a summary of major recommendations with regard to implementation of the redevelopment of the area.

Preface

In 1976 the St. John's Heritage Conservation Area Study identified the Beck's Cove area as one of the most important historic and architectural parts of the city and a cornerstone for the conservation area. Since that time, changes, debates and developments have taken place which have altered the influences upon, but not the actual physical structure, of George Street and Water Street, between Bishop's Cove and Beck's's Cove.

The Murray Premises have been restored, and George Street has developed into an entertainment centre but in general the area remains in physical decline.

Impending developments on the fringes , the pressing needs for infrastructure improvements and the disposition of the area's historically valuable buildings, led to the City's proposal call in February, 1985, for a "Retail Core Area Design Study" to prepare a design for physical improvements in the area.

The following design study is a response to the proposal call. Its orientation is architectural as well as open space design at an area plan level, with suggestions for specific details. The aspect of new economic use is addressed in the context of its relationship to physical design and to implementation of the proposed solution.

It is hoped that the concept, plans and ideas presented not only serve as a guide for the city in its planning and operations, but that they also form a tangible image that can assist property owners in their efforts at improving their buildings, and also act as a catalyst for the concerted effort by all the groups.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Preface

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 3

2.0 Overview 5

3.0 Introduction 7
3.1 History and Function 7
3.2 Relationship to Downtown 7
3.3 Building Use 9
3.4 Architecture 9
3.5 Building Condition 13
3.6 Open Space 14
3.7 Engineering Aspects 16
3.8 Zoning and Building Code 18
3.9 Summary of Problems and Opportunities 18

4.0 Concept for Development 21
4.1 Objectives 21
4.2 General Concept 21
4.3 The Use Concept 24
4.4 Quality of Space 24
4.5 The Master Plan 25

5.0 Design Development
5.0 Introduction 27
5.1 Open Space 27
Special Projects: 27
Beck's Cove Steps 27
The Old City Hall Site 27
Civic Park 28
5.2 Urban Design Elements 29
5.3 Architecture 32
Exterior Renovation Guidelines 32
Infill Guidelines 37
Signs 37
Awnings 39
5.4 Sample Studies 40
5.5 Infill Opportunities 41
5.6 Engineering Aspects 45
Parking 45
Underground Services 45
Overhead Wiring 45
5.7 Conclusion 45

6.0 Implementation 47
6.0 Introduction 47
6.1 Requirements for Success 47
6.2 Management and Organizational Structure 47
6.3 Priorities 48
6.4 Special Project Areas 48
6.5 Development Control 50
6.6 Budget and Finance 50
6.7 Summary of Major Recommendations 50

7.0 Conclusion 53

Appendix 55
- Design project by Paul Blackwood 56
- Excerpt from St. John's Heritage Conservation Study 61
- Large scale maps (limited number available)

Bibliography 65

Acknowledgements 66

1. Introduction

1.0 The appropriate form of redevelopment for the downtown has been debated for a decade, usually encouraged by a large development proposal. The need for debate is probably now over in that existing and proposed projects occupy most sites capable of being developed, and the new municipal plan makes zoning change more difficult than before.

In the meantime, an area of the downtown between Duckworth/New Gower St., Harbour Drive, Bishops Cove and Beck's Cove has been left undisturbed. There are no large projects that have been approved, zoning limits development to four stories, existing investment is taking place, and the architectural, historic as well as open space aspects are of real interest and value. Yet there is underuse of the area, some of the buildings are deteriorating and there are indications that several important structures are threatened. The streets and sidewalks and many parts of the open space are in poor condition. In short there is a need to properly plan the area and an opportunity to create a place for people that is an attraction for both residents and visitors.

In this study, a physical design for the area has been prepared. The main emphasis is on street and pedestrian-oriented activities. These activities can occur on City Lands, potentially buildable sites, rear yards and public spaces. The design was created in the context of the larger downtown core with particular reference to a variety of factors. These factors include retail areas, traffic, pedestrian circulation, the new convention centre, City Hall, a future parking area, new and existing major developments and the harbour. The design incorporates the objectives of the city, and those of businesses, workers, residents, and visitors. The architectural and historic character is an important influence on the design.

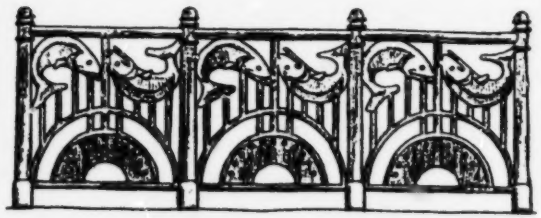
The expertise and resources of the city are not duplicated in the design proposal. For example, civil infrastructure is considered in the concept, but no details are included. Elements of the design are developed to the extent that they show a clear picture of their intent, but not to the extent that would be required for actual construction.

The study is organized into sections starting with a study of the existing area. This has utilized and consolidated available reports and studies, visual inspections and meetings with business people and the city to form an understanding of the area , its problems and opportunities.

The concept for development is an out growth of an understanding of the area and the application of design and planning principles. It is largely a verbal and symbolic representation of what the area could and should be like.

The detailed design elaborates on aspects alluded to in the concept. Primarily visual, it shows the principles of building and open space design, guidelines for renovations and new construction.

The aspects of implementation phasing and costing are also addressed. While not in detail, it suggests the priorities for early development and a structure for implementation.



2. Overview

2.0 In most major Canadian cities there is concerted downtown redevelopment with an emphasis on the user, the quality of the place, and the utilization of the existing architectural resources. The Halifax Waterfront, old Montreal, Toronto Harbourfront, Vancouver's Gastown and Granville Island are but a few examples. These areas not only provide improvements in the cities, but they are also major attractions for visitors.

St. John's, with the oldest downtown and some of the most interesting building forms in North America, does not have this downtown redevelopment. The retail core area is perhaps the last opportunity to realize the quality improvements already achieved by other cities. Accidents of history have left the downtown with many derelict buildings, and vacant spaces in conjunction with some of the cities most valuable architecture. It has an existing vitality but is strained by inadequacies in its infrastructure.

Despite these inadequacies, the area has the conditions that have been found in other cities to be indispensable in attracting people. These are as follows:

1) The general area and its components have the potential to serve more than one primary function. There are major diverse developments occurring on its perimeter which ensure the presence of people who will pass through the area at different schedules for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.

2) The blocks are short in that streets, laneways and opportunities to turn corners are frequent. George St. itself is not a major traffic route and is very suitable for pedestrians.

3) The area has variety in the age, condition and type of buildings.

4) The concentration of people is likely to increase for whatever purpose that they may be there. Given these conditions, it is possible to nurture the area to create effective economic pools of use and realize its best potential. In short it is an area of opportunity.

The area, because of the mixture of building ages, forms and architectural styles, requires a sensitive visual design. New buildings must relate to the old, renovations must maintain the original characteristics. We recognize that it is not desirable to rigidly design or specify every aspect of the area, however, this report develops the guidelines for the renovations and new construction of buildings suggesting design elements and particular themes that are consistent with an appropriate feeling and identity.

Existing and projected use patterns within and outside the area are considered and interelated. This

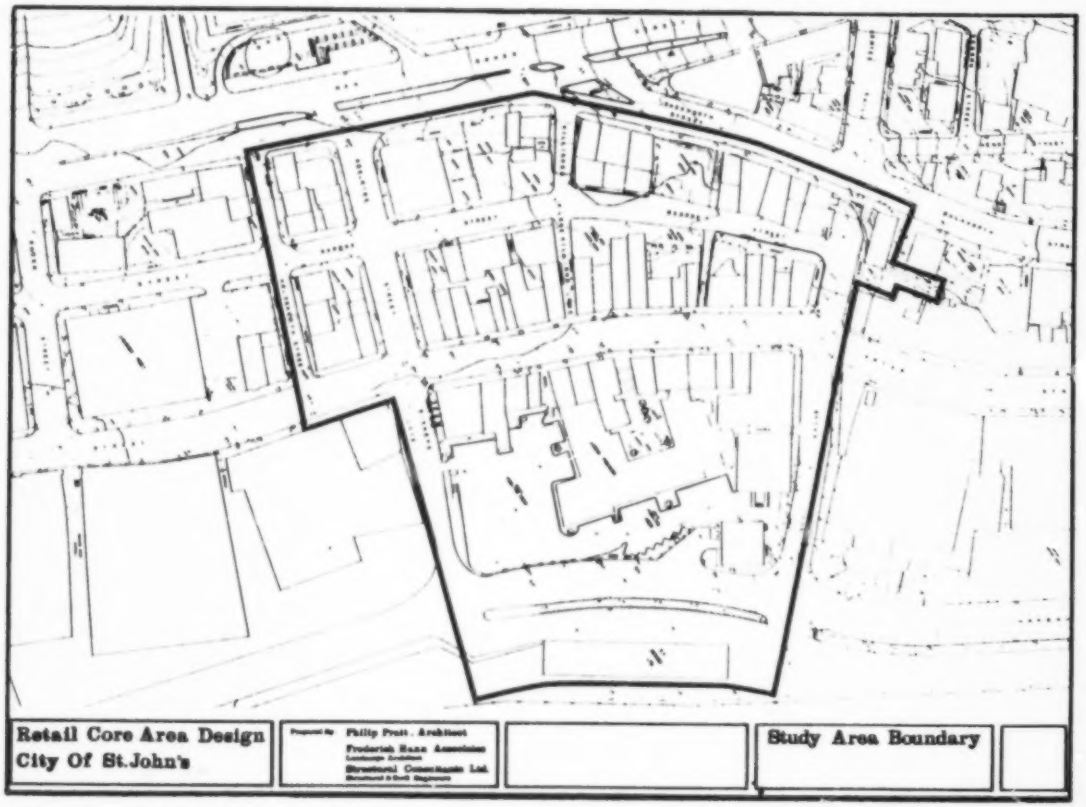


Fig. 2.0.1 Study Area Boundaries

has implications on physical and economic design. Vehicular and pedestrian access must be accommodated to provide safe and convenient access. The open space components of the carriageway, sidewalks, courtyards and pocket parks, should be designed to respond to the irregular building patterns creating changing vistas and varied spaces which will improve the areas visual image and form. In this respect visual upgrading must be granted high priority in the development plan.

Physical improvements to the streetscape should be uncluttered and in complete sympathy with the surroundings. The main entrances to the area should be clearly defined. Pathways should be clearly articulated by paving materials, lighting, signage and plant material. Sunny spaces should be emphasized and defined for seating; at the intersection of pathways, in courtyards and adjacent to building entrances.

The study area is only a part of the section of the retail core of St. John's. While its potential for this type of development is strongest because of the concentration of essential elements, its spread into other areas should be encouraged.

3. The Existing Area

3.0 The Beck's Cove part of the retail core area is, and probably always has been, in transition. This is, to a large extent, the reason for the current interest. At present it is peripheral to the main commercial and retail section of the downtown. There are industrial uses on its perimeter as well as large, proposed commercial projects. Yet none seem destined for the area itself.

3.1 History and Function

The area is particularly significant to the history of St. John's. It contains the oldest groupings of 19th century mercantile buildings in the city having survived the 1892 fire. In addition, there are numerous historic anecdotes and associations with the area.

Historically the main commercial area of Water Street was to the east. The steep hill in that area prevented back up activities which consequently located to the west, where the land leveled out.

George St. was always a service/back street for the commercial premises on the north side of Water St. and the south side of Duckworth/New Gower Streets. It served the city well with warehousing, hay/feed & produce sales, forges, ferriors, carriage works and residences, just to name a few. The location, ownership and nature of these uses changed quite considerably in time while the service/back street nature of George Street remained relatively consistent. It was not until 1905 that George St. became a thoroughfare when a few buildings along Beck's Cove were demolished to create a firebreak.

Fig. 3.1.1 Water St. looking east from Adelaide St. (circa 1885) by S.H. Parsons

Fig. 3.1.2. The same area today

Since that time, especially in the last twenty years, the service/back street character has been changing rapidly. The east end of George St. can now be considered an entertainment center. Numerous nightclubs, bars and restaurants have opened and are doing good business. Recent approval has been given for at least two more bars.

The study area will soon be flanked to the east and west by some major commercial/office developments. As an entertainment/retail center the study area will still maintain its purpose of servicing the downtown and the rest of the city.

3.2 Relationship to Downtown

Presently, the largest group of potential users of the area are found in the residential area to the north east and the commercial area to the east.

In a study of downtown transportation and parking (Delcan 1982) population projections for the area suggested a significant growth to the north and west comparable to the existing population to the east. These growth projections are outlined below:

Population North East and East

	1981	2001
Employees	2750	3500
Residents	1100	1000
Total	3750	4500

Population North and West

	1981	2001
Employees	550	4200
Residents	100	1100
Total	650	5300

Total Population in Relation to Study Area

1981	2001
4400	9800

According to the Delcan projections within the next 15 years the area will have 9800 people, or an additional 5400 people, living or working on its perimeter. Most of these 9800 people are within a ten to fifteen minute walk from the area, as illustrated in Figure (3.2.1). This conforms to the maximum distance one will walk to use a place on a regular basis. These population projections,being part of a larger mosaic, have necessitated the development of a transportation plan to upgrade the roads on the perimeter of the study area. Traffic projections for the major road are as follows:

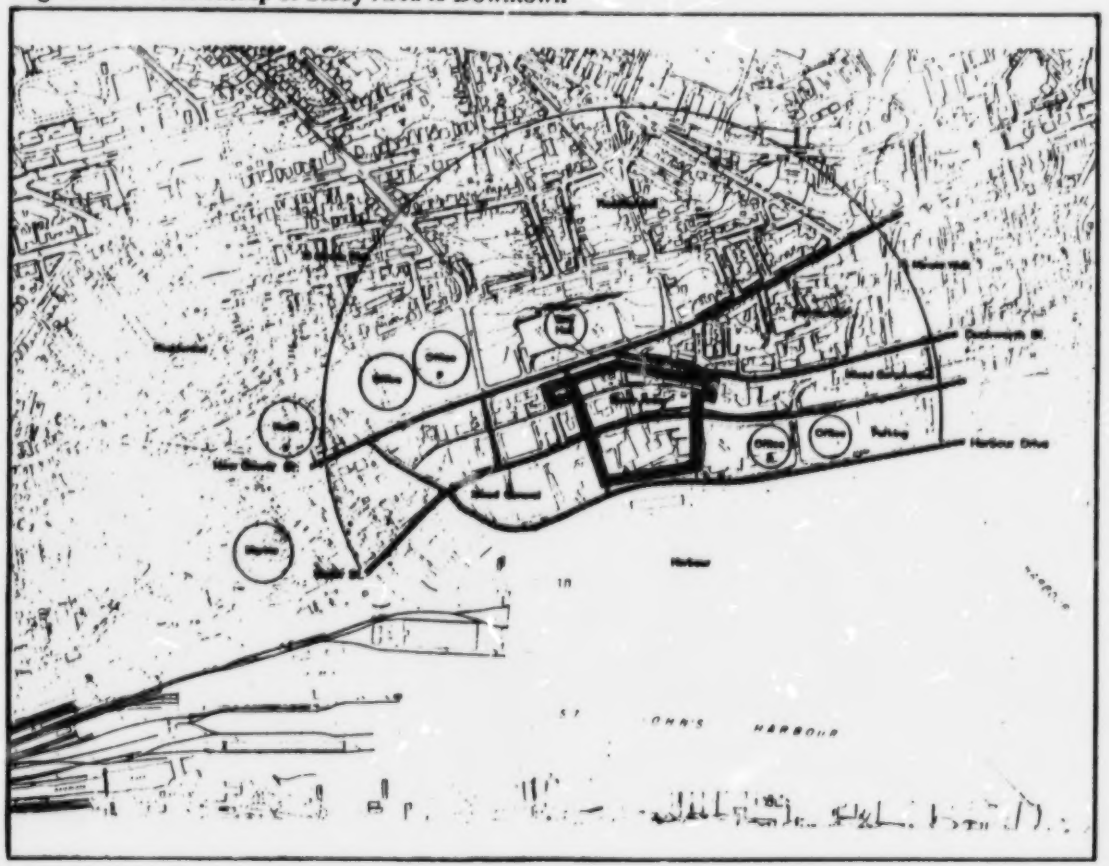
Queen's Road	1500 vehicles/hr.
Duckworth St.	1000 vehicles/hr.
New Gower St.	2500 vehicles/hr.
Water St.	1000 vehicles/hr.
Harbour Dr.	2000 vehicles/hr.

These roads have the potential to be major barriers to the movement of people into the area. It is fundamentally important that pedestrian access be developed to facilitate safe, comfortable and convenient access from the pedestrian paths linking the core area to the surrounding area. To this end the main gateway to the study area are as follows and should receive special attention:

*Bishop's Cove - Harbour Drive
*Beck's Cove - Harbour Drive
*Beck's Cove - Water Street
*Beck's Cove - Duckworth Street
*Bishop's Cove - Water Street
*Adelaide Street - George Street
*Adelaide Street - New Gower Street

Intersections near the convention centre and the Manulife Centre at New Gower - Springdale St., New Gower St., Queen St. will in time be recognized for their importance as significant pedestrian access points.

Fig. 3.2.1 Relationship of Study Area to Downtown



3.3 Building Use

Figure 3.3.1 shows the existing building use in the area. The categories of use have been selected to relate to the existing uses and to the purpose of this study. It is not intended to be all inclusive but more to show general patterns. In cases where more than one use exists the ground level use is shown.

Bars & Restaurants are distributed throughout the area, the most active ones being on George St. In addition, this is almost the only use on the street.

Retail and Service is concentrated mainly on Water St. The types vary, oriented towards smaller specialized operations. There are several craft outlets and a number of service type offices such as banks, trust and insurance companies etc.

Residential. With respect to residential, it exists as a component at street level, with slightly more in the areas above other uses.

Vacancy: The use map shows only a few vacant builldings, although this is deceptive.

There is, in fact, a fair amount of vacant or underused space above the main floor levels, and several of the street level uses could be more productive.

A number of observations can be made concerning use:

* The activity on George St. is limited to the night time and to a narrow but dedicated clientele. A number of people feel that there are enough bars in the area.

*The retail function on Water St. is not as active as it should be. There is very little evening activity.

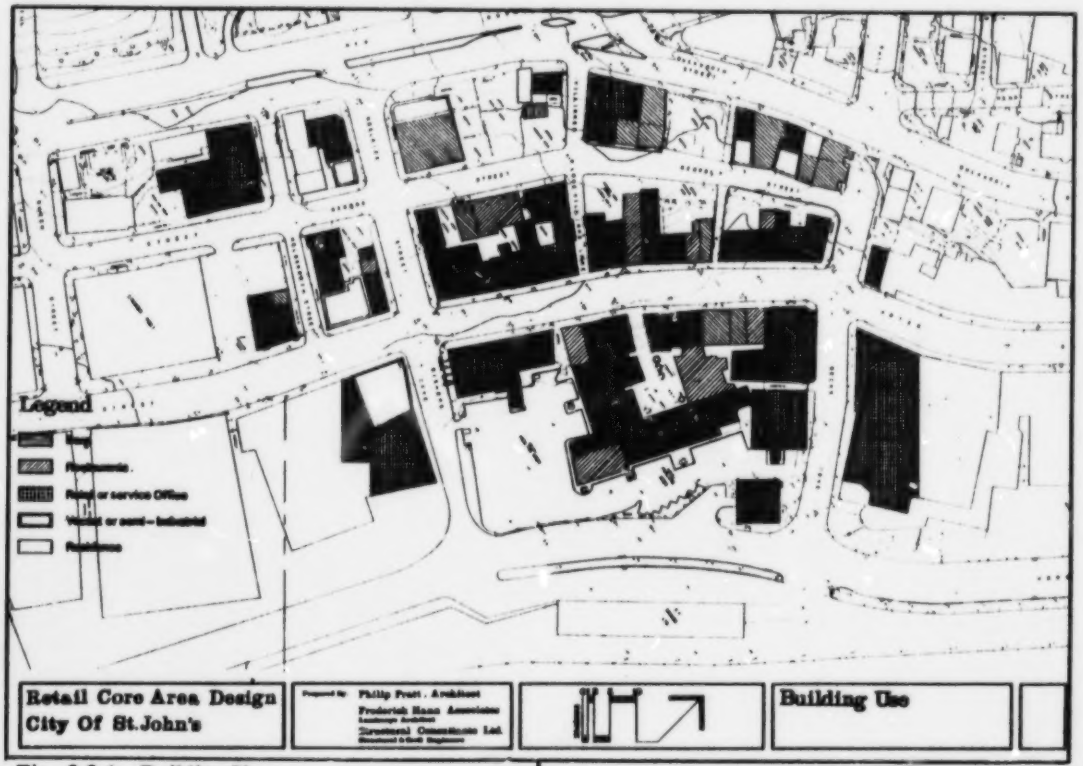


Fig. 3.3.1 Building Use

*The harbour front's potential as an attraction is not being realized.

*O'Keefe's Grocery is doing a fair business despite the fact that the building is for sale. The introduction of more residential use in the area will increase its potential even more.

3.4 Architecture

The architecture of the study area is most strongly characterized by the pre-1892 Mercantile vernacular buildings, distinguished by their peaked roofs. There is in reality a good variation in building styles, shown in the map. (Fig 3.4.1)

The categories that have been chosen relate to the characteristics of the area, and to the significant differences.

There is in reality a fairly high degree of homogeneity in the important aspects of building size, form and use of materials.

Characteristics

Pre 1892 Fire
Mercantile/Vernaculor
(fig. 3.4.2)
Material - Stone - Brick
Peaked roof
Vertical Proportion
Window Form & Store Window

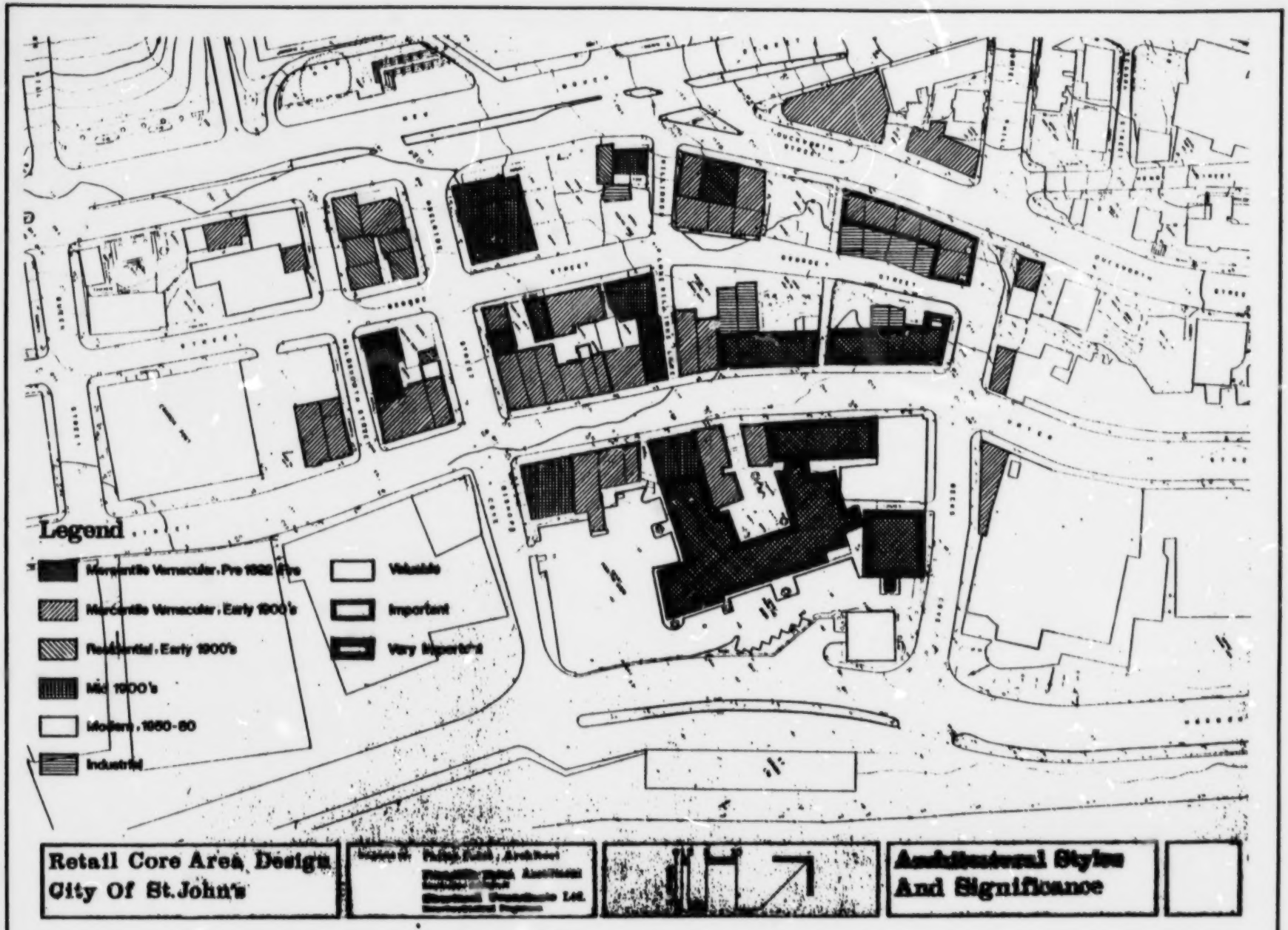


Fig. 3.4.1 Architectural styles

Fig. 3.4.2 Pre-1892 Mercantile/Vernacular

Early 1900's
Mercantile/Vernacular (fig. 3.4.3)
- Material: Brick - Stone - Wood
- Flat roof
- Vertical Proportion
- Window Form & Store Windows
- Mansard Roof

Early 1900's
Residential/Vernacular (fig. 3.4.4)
- Material: Wood - Clapboard
- Flat Roof (Mansard)
- Vertical Proportion
- Window Form

Mid 1900's Commercial (fig. 3.4.5)
- Material: Concrete & Glass
- Flat Roof
- 2 Storey - Horizontal Proportion
- "Picture" window

Modern
1950 - 1980
- Material: Brick/Concrete/Other
- Boxy

Industrial
- Add on Forms
- Metal or other siding

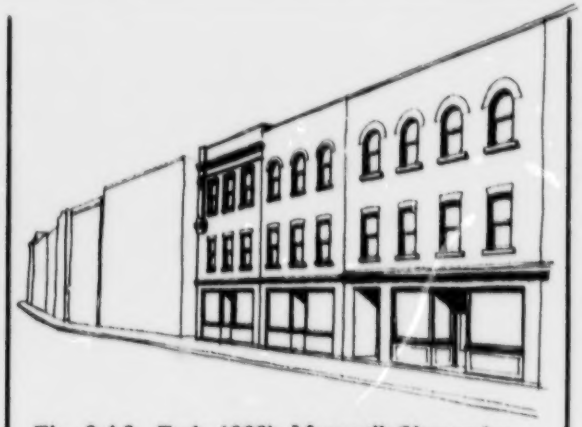


Fig. 3.4.3 Early 1900's Mercantile/Vernacular

Fig. 3.4.4. Early 1900's Residential/Vernacular

Fig. 3.4.5 Mid 1900's Commercial

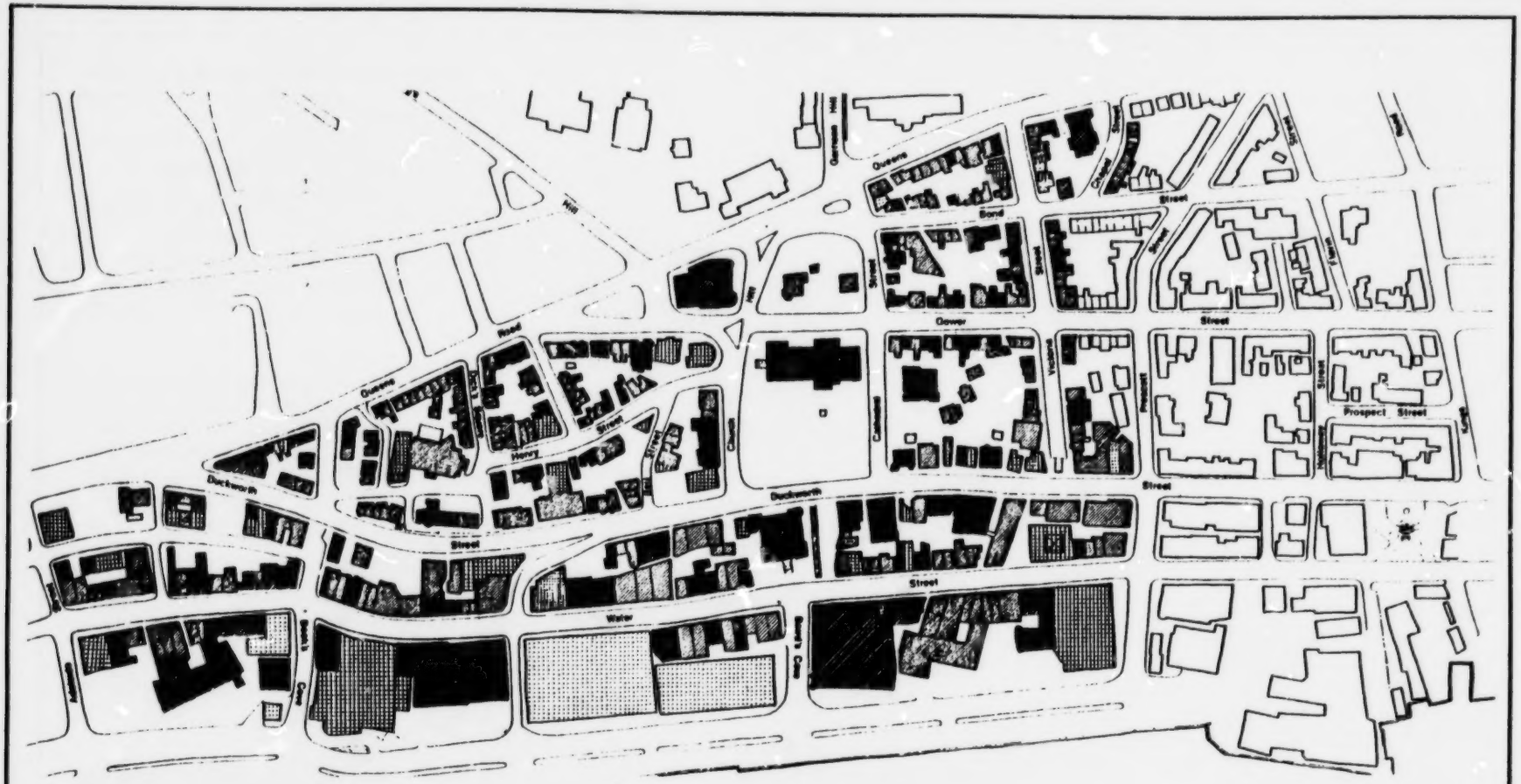
The pre-1892 and the 20th century mercantile buildings comprise the bulk of the buildings in the area. Similar in many ways, the main distinction is the roof form.

Despite there being several building types in the area, there is a remarkable visual cohesiveness, especially on Water St. Buildings are predominately brick or stone, 3 stories in height, with characteristic form and proportions. On George St. the architecture is more mixed. It maintains the overall scale of the area but there is variation in some of the forms and materials. Because there are several sites suitable for infill, and several buildings in need of renovation, this allows a certain degree of playfulness in generating the forms.

The St. John's Heritage Study identified the relative merits of buildings in the area. That map (fig. 3.4.6) is reproduced here with architectural styles showing that, in general, most of the area should be maintained. Of particular importance are the pre-1892 buildings, especially those in groups projecting visible gable ends.

Many buildings have partial facade renovations or bad signage that will need to be cleaned up. Only three have major 'stylized' facades. One of these should be changed. In general the facades on most buildings are intact, the drawing of which (Fig. 3.4.7), in part, identifies the major changes.

Fig. 3.4.7 Roof form characteristic of pre-1892 buildings



Categories

	1	2	3	4	5
Residential	0%	30%	58%	10%	2%
Commercial	1%	36%	48%	12%	3%
Institutional	12%	63%	25%	0%	0%

Fig. 3.4.6 Map reproduced from "St. John's Heritage Area Conservation Study" showing "Preservation Priorities"

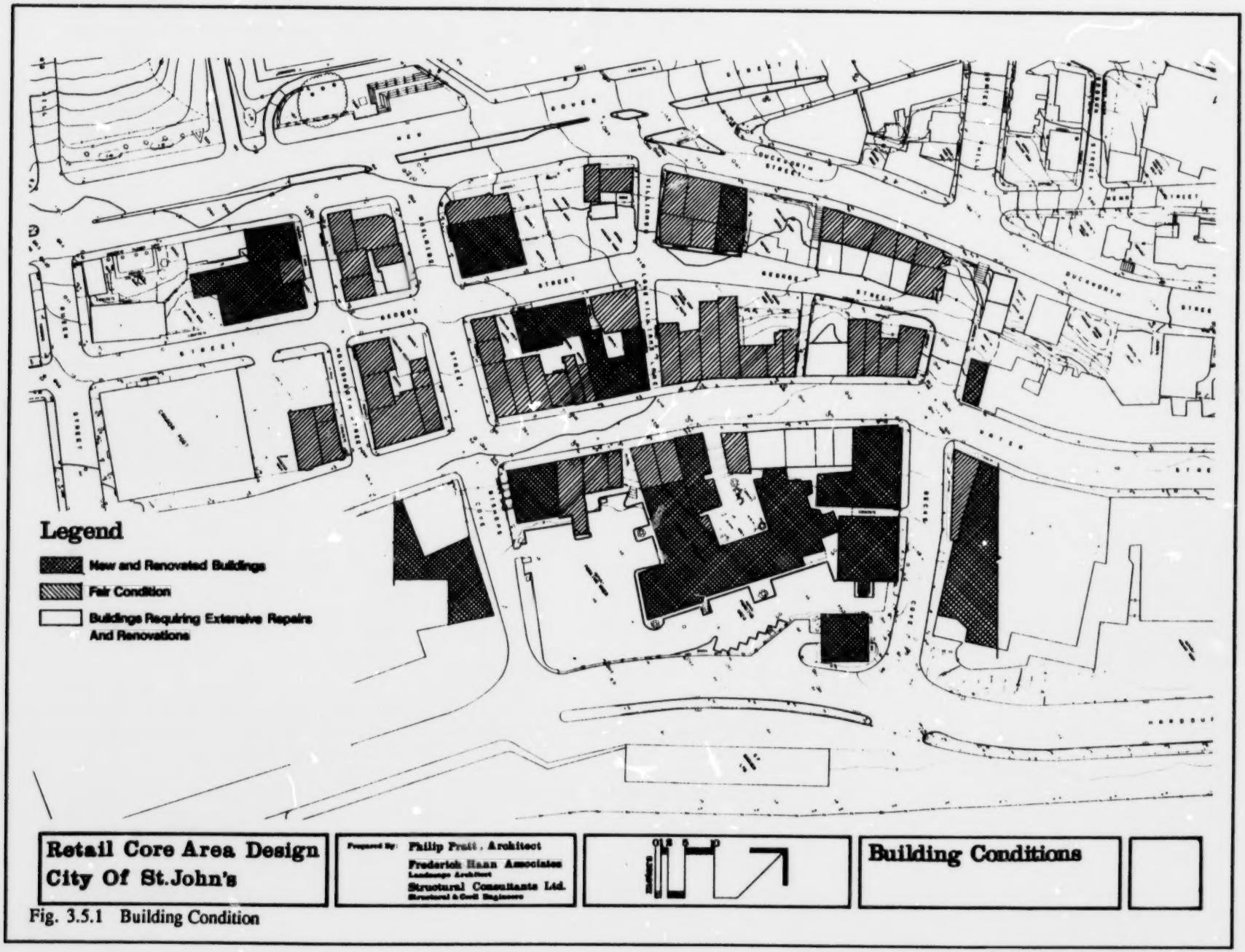


Fig. 3.5.1 Building Condition

3.5. Building Condition

The survey of building condition is based primarily on observations from the outside, and is intended as a general indication of work required.

Three categories are illustrated in Fig. 3.5.1. They are as follows:

**New and renovated buildings:* These are in good condition.

**Fair Condition:* Represent the majority of buildings in the area. The range of condition within this category varies, but generally they are in or can be put in serviceble condition. Most require some level of investment to improve their usefulness.

Fig. 3.5.2 Inappropriate renovations

**Buildings requiring extensive repairs and renovations:* In general the cost of renovating these buildings is equivalent to new construction. In cases where their architectural quality is not significant or there is a desirable alternative use, their demolition could be considered.

Parts of many buildings are in bad condition and need to be upgraded for the appearance of the area. These generally include the backs, sheds and lean-to's as well as miscellaneous construction such as steps and rails.

There have also been a number of recent renovations which have deteriorated very quickly or are of a poor standard of workmanship to start with. These should be replaced.

Two groups of buildings, #300 and 293 - 299 Water Street (fig. 3.5.3) were identified as being in poor condition and are very important both architecturally and historically. These buildings have been examined in more detail and the conclusion is that, while significant work, including structural, is required, they are basically sound and could be renovated. The level of work is probably equivalent to that carried out on parts of the Murray Premises.

293 - 299 Water St. are heavy timber, post and beam construction, the exterior being comprised of brick and stone. The structure is substantial, with some settlement occurring over the years, possibly due to rot at the foundation/wood interface. There is severe settlement in the roof of which at least part can be attributed to wood columns having been removed on the upper floors.

From a structural viewpoint the buildings could be reinstated with a few structural renovations. The type of work necessary would include:

a) Removing and replacing rotted timber at the foundation level.

b) Replacing columns that have been removed.

c) Levelling the flooring system.

d) Installing a new roof; framing in certain areas.

The face of the buildings show very little evidence of cracks; however, some parging and repainting is necessary.

The mechanical and electrical system may be in need of upgrading. The amount of interior work will depend on proposed uses for the building and code requirements.

Fig. 3.5.3 Back of 300 Water St.

300 Water Street is a 3 1/2 storey post-and-beam constructed building with exterior stone and masonry walls. The building shares many of the characteristics of 293-299 Water St. and the Murray Premises, with the following additional comments.

There appears to be some settlement due to water under the foundation and to rot and shrinkage. Replacement, levelling and rebuilding parts of the foundation would be necessary.

Part of the exterior has been allowed to deteriorate and repointing is required. The largest part of this, at the rear could be integrated with the possible new construction, of an infill addition. This would help with the construction and economic viability of a very significant piece of architecture.

3.6 Open Space

Open space is the unifying element in the area. It functions as the glue, the structuring element which brings the diverse forms of buildings together as a unit. The open space in the area consists of the street, sidewalks, alley ways - laneways, the parking lots and all empty lots, public or private, that have the potential to be developed for use by the patrons to the area.

The prime reason for upgrading the quality of the open spaces is to make the area a comfortable and safe place for people day and night It must be well-lit, clean as well as having a variety of sitting choices, either in the shade, the sun, upfront or in groups. It must build upon existing patterns of movement so that people can comfortably walk in the rain or, when the weather is fine, provide opportunities for people to gather very close to the intersecting lines of pedestrian movement. When it comes right down to it, what attracts people is other people. There is a need to make the space appealing so that people will come downtown and spend their money. The area, as it presently exists, is rundown and, as such, it is only marginally accomodating the variety of pedestrian-oriented activities such as walking, gathering, standing in line or watching people. All sections of a street should not be designed to a universal open space standard of "X" meters wide for the roadway or sidewalk. Flexibility is required to accommodate the ebb and flow of pedestrian movement. Some sections of sidewalk should be wider than others. In some areas there is no need to have a sharp distinction between the sidewalk and the driving lane.

Figure 3.6.1 graphically illustrates the plan area that offers opportunities and constraints for the use of open space. Amorphous spaces require special definition and a structure in order for them to be useable and attractive for people-gathering.

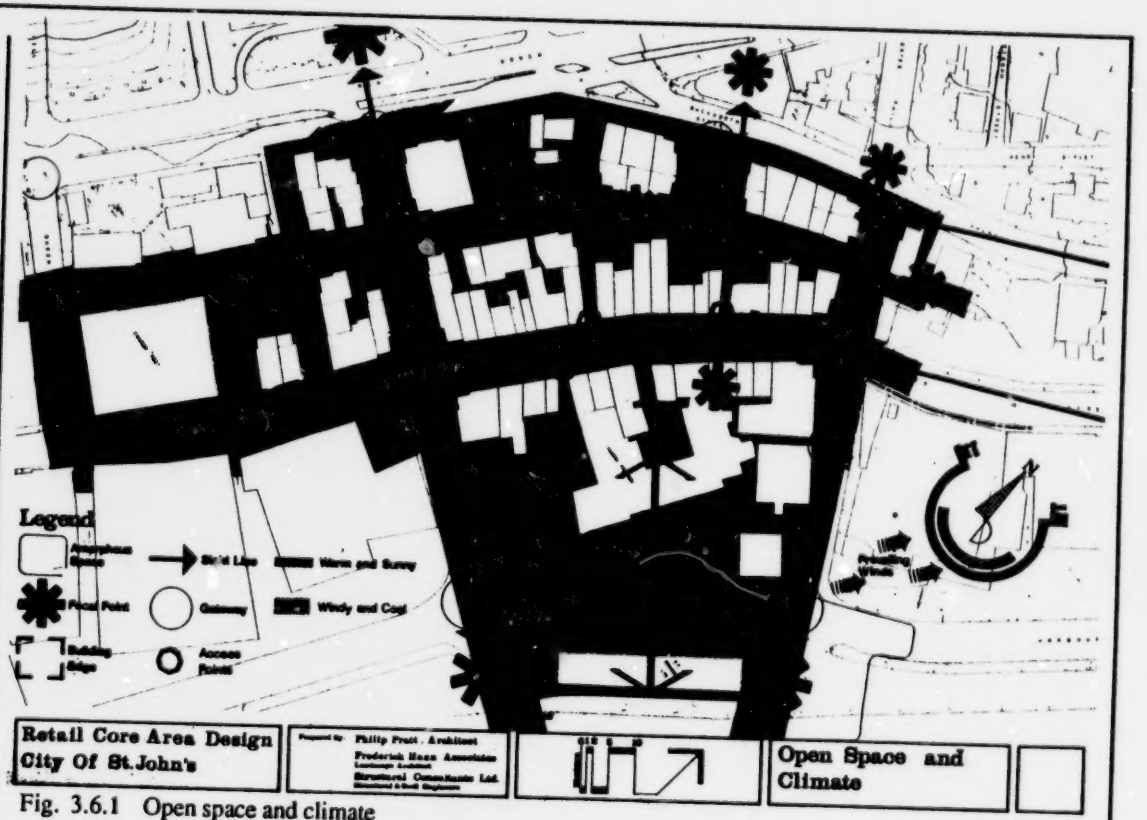


Fig. 3.6.1 Open space and climate

Focal points are the areas that are seen from two or more places. These points are very significant as visual cues to help orient people and act as key places for people to gather. Business activity centered around or near these focal points usually are very successful provided that the business caters to the needs of the people. Where building edges are weak or non-existent infill construction should be considered to make the area function as an activity node and a place of commerce. Gateways should be reinforced to identify the area as a distinct part of the downtown. Areas that are warm and sunny or windy and cool should be designed to make people more comfortable. The potential for the area can be improved by the extent to which it is possible to make provisions for people to stay.

Climate

The major climatic elements affecting human comfort may be categorized as follows: air temperature, radiation, air movement and humidity. These conditions interact with the buildings of the area to produce a specific micro-climate. When these conditions are perceived by people their effect is to influence the use of the outdoor surroundings for specific activities. In designing the outdoor environment the problem is one of providing a setting which is comfortable for people during specific activities. In this part of downtown the activities are primarily walking, standing in line to get into various establishments and occasionally sitting. Failing to consider the interaction of

climate can have a fundamental bearing on whether people will use the area for its intended use. If the surroundings are uncomfortable people will be less inclined to either use the public spaces or patronize the various business establishments.

The climatic conditions in St. John's are as follows*:

	June 21	December 21
Air temperature	12.2 C	-3.9C
Wind velocity (west)	17.2 kph	30.9 kph
Hours of Sunshine	7.6 hrs	1.3 hrs
Precipitation	1.5mm	15.7mm

*Environment Canada (for 1980 - 1985)

Wind is by far one of the significant factors limiting the use of outdoor spaces. In St. John's the winds range from moderate to strong breezes, (Beaufort Scale 4 to 6). Table 1 summarizes the wind effects on people based on the Beaufort Scale.

These criteria have been considered in designing the open space areas. The criteria affect the use and location of trees, awnings, location of doorways, the choice of colours and the location of public gathering spaces and sitting areas.

The significant aspects of the area that have a bearing on the comfort of patrons in the area are outlined as follows and illustrated on figure 3.6.1:

1. The east-west orientation of the streets align with the prevailing winds hence the streets can be quite windy and uncomfortable during periods of low temperature and precipitation.

2. Wind shedding from large structures such as the Post Office building or narrow and relatively high buildings such as T.G.I.F. creates much turbulence at street level. The turbulence extends from the corner of the buildings and can exert its strongest influence on the surrounding spaces equal to the height of the buildings. Small parks, streets and intersections in these areas should be designed to accomodate several trees to dissipate the effects of the wind. The choice of colours for building facades should flavour the warm end of the colour spectrum to psychologically add warmth to the area.

3. The old City Hall site presents the most favourable conditions for the development of a public gathering area in that it is the affected by

Table 1* Summary of wind effects on people based on the Beaufort Scale

	Beaufort number	Speed (m/s)	Effects
Calm, light air	0, 1	0 - 1.5	Calm, no noticable wind
Light breeze	2	1.6 - 3.3	Wind felt on face
Gentle Breeze	3	3.4 - 5.4	Wind extents light flag Hair is disturbed Clothing flaps
Moderate breeze	4	5.5 - 7.9	Raises dust, dry soil and loose paper Hair disarranged
Fresh breeze	5	8.0 - 10.7	Force of wind felt on body Drifting snow becomes airborne Limit of agreeable wind on land
Strong breeze	6	10.8 -13.8	Umbrellas used with difficulty Hair blown straight Difficult to walk steadily Wind noise on ear unpleasant Windborne snow above head height (blizzard)
Near gale	7	13.9 - 17.1	Inconvenience felt when walking
Gale	8	17.2 - 20.7	Generally impedes progress Great difficulty with balance in gusts

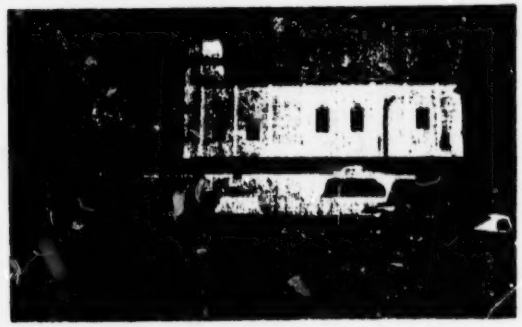


Fig. 3.6.2

Table 2* summarizes the comfort criteria for various activities under different wind conditions

Activity	Areas Applicable	Relative Comfort: Perceptible	Tolerable	Unpleasant	Dangerous
1. Walking fast	Sidewalks	5	6 (43%)	7 (50%)	8 (53%)
2. Strolling, skating	Parks, entrances, skating rinks	4	5 (23%)	6 (34%)	8 (53%)
3. Standing, sitting - short exposure	Parks, plaza areas	3	4 (6%)	5 (15%)	8 (53%)
4. Standing, sitting - long exposure	Outdoor rerstaurants, band stands, theatres	2	3 (0.1%)	4 (3%)	8 (53%)
Representative criteria for acceptability			<1 occassion/week	<1 occ./yr. <1 occassion/month	

Units: Beaufort number; values in parentheses are frequencies with which wind speeds above 5 m/s occur, calculated as described in the text.
Temperature: >10 degrees C; at lower temperatures relative comfort level might be expected to be reduced by one Beaufort number for every 20 degrees C reduction in temperature

Journal of Industrial Aerodynamics 1978

wind and the buildings create a sun trap. This space should have trees planted to the west of its entrance on George Street and Duckworth Street to dissipate wind energy. Colours for the framing buildings should be warm tones. Seating areas should be near the back of the space and orientated toward the southwest.

4. Awnings should be mounted over building entrances and extend along the side of the building in establishments where people frequently stand in line.

5. Fixed awnings should be mounted at both ends of the Laneways and at the entrance to Murray Premises between Tooton's and the Liquor Store.

6. Because the area tends to be windy every opportunity should be taken to mount banners and erect flagpoles to celebrate the wind thus adding character and flare to the area.

7. Buildings on the south side of the street are generally in the shade, hence they should be painted warm and bright colours.

3.7 Engineering Aspects

While it is not the intent of this study to look at the infrastructure and services in the area consideration has been made in terms of the relationship to the rest of the design. Impending capital works for example will have an influence on both type and timing of other design. Discussions with the Engineering Department of the city and on site observations have led to the following conclusions:

*The underground water and sewer lines, although old, are in serviceable condition. Cleaning of the water line is required, but no major replacement is necessary.

*New surface drainage of five or six catch basins can be accomplished in the existing combined sanitary/storm sewer.

*Individual infill sites will have their own specific requirements.

The map 3.7.1 shows the general condition of streets and sidewalks. With one exception along Duckworth St., Water St. and Harbour Drive and small portions of other streets, curb, gutter and paving is required on most streets and lanes, particularily George Street.

The condition of overhead wiring is very poor. It is the most visible distraction in the open space. The normal exposed wiring problem is complicated on George St. by the fact that it was a back street and semi-industrial area. There is a chaotic placing and spacing of utility poles with large numbers of wires radiating from them. There are large transformers clustered together on poles, and there are unsightly and inappropriate service drops on some buildings. (fig. 3.7.2)

In general there is a lot of work required in upgrading the normal capital work in the area. There is an opportunity to do this in conjunction with other improvements which may be desirable.

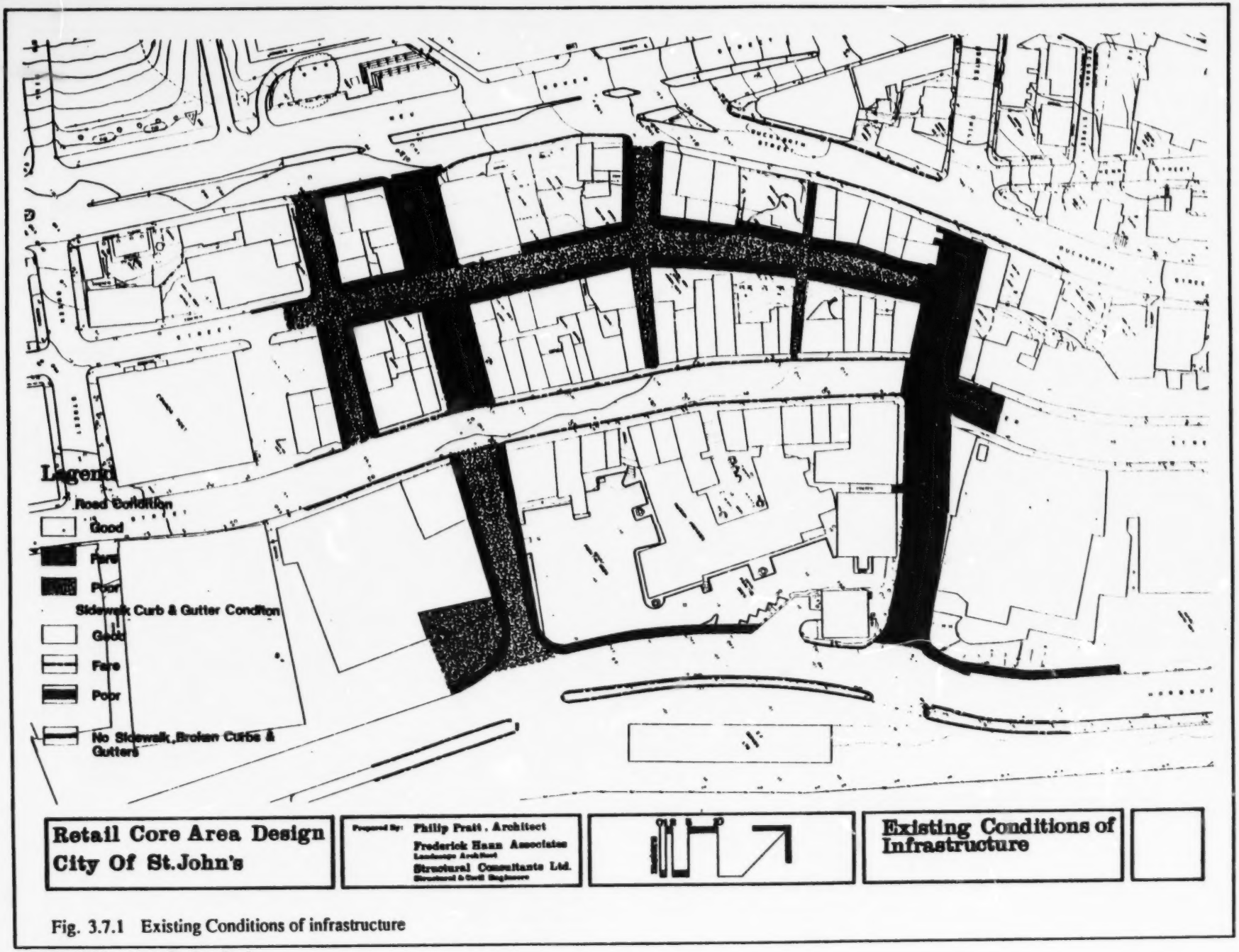


Fig. 3.7.1 Existing Conditions of infrastructure

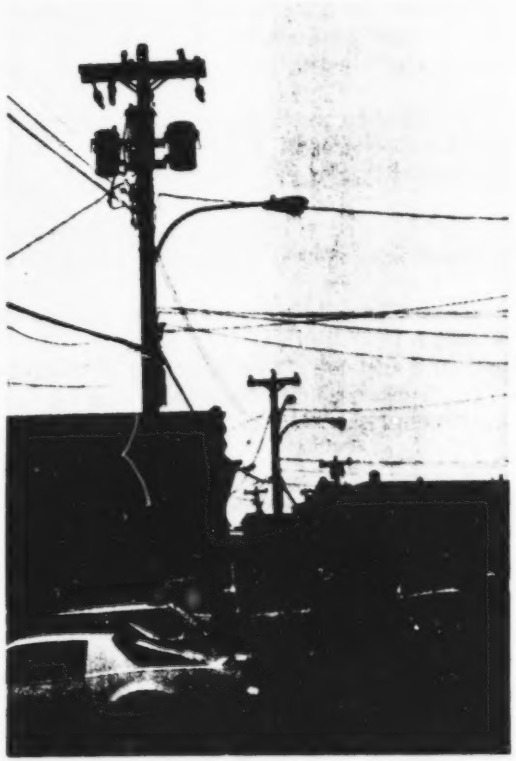


Fig. 3.7.2 Overhead wires.

3.8 Zoning and Building Code

Building and renovations in St. John's are controlled by zoning regulations and the National Building Code. Their provisions have implications for the type of work that can be feasible, especially for renovations.

The study area overlaps two zones: Commercial Central Mixed and Commercial Central Retail. Both allow a wide range of uses and redevelopment. Set backs, floor area ratios and other limits are also appropriate for the type of renovations and redevelopment that we would encourage.

The building height limit is four stories in both zones. This provision should be rigidly adhered to for any proposed development as the aspect of scale is crucial to the concept for the area.

Zoning Requirements

George St.	Commercial Central Mixed
Water St.	Commercial Central Retail

	C.C.M	C.C.R
Uses	Wide Range	Wide Range
F.A R.	3.0 1.5 (res)	3.0
Comm. (Min.)	1 storey at Grade	
Height	4s, 15m	4s, 15m
Bldg Line	Street	Street
Res. Density	1/60m	-
Mix Comm.	24%	-

Building Code

Building Code and Life Safety considerations must be taken into account for all projects, each of which will have its own peculiarities.

The three areas of main concern in renovating the types of buildings in the area are:

Building Height: Many of the structures which are three stories on the street and four on the back, qualify as four stories by code. As they are of "combustible" construction they are technically in violation of the building code. Generally this can be resolved by consultation with authorities during the design process.

Exit Requirements: Secondary and separate exits are usually required from all occupancies. There is often difficulty in finding suitable locations and space. This is an area where cooperation between building owners can be of mutual benefit.

Fire Separators: Multiple occupancy of buildings such as Residential above office require a fire separation between spaces and a fire rating, for supporting walls. The one hour rating which is generally required, is not overly difficult to attain but involves a great deal of interior finish work.

Fire separations are always required between different buildings.

While building code and zoning must be considered in detail there are no fundamental problems for area redevelopment.

3.9 Summary of Problems and Opportunities.

This section of St. John's has been a typical mixed mercantile area for several centuries. It is at the interface between the port commercial, industrial and residential components.

The function seems to have varied but, essentially, it was a service area feeding into the surrounding uses.

The area escaped the 1892 fire; thus, we have a more diverse architecture than most of the downtown, including the only group of pre-fire mercantile structures interspaced with some newer buildings. In general, there is a good consistency of building form and texture with relatively minor alteration to original facades.

Building condition is seen as being average for the downtown with most being in serviceble condition. There are a few exceptions, but even these are not extremely deteriorated. Several wood frame structures are probably beyond economic value. All of the severe deterioration has been removed resulting in a fair amount of vacant space.

The use of the area varies, Water Street maintains its Retail/Commercial function, albeit at less than a desirable pace. George Street has developed into an evening bar area due to the availablity of cheap space, a lack of regulations and by the pedestrian nature of the street.

The area shares with the rest of the downtown problems in parking, traffic and general circulation. There is an underuse of many existing buildings.

Existing and proposed developments on the perimenter of the area will have an impact both in aggravating existing problems and providing an opportunity for renewed investment. It is important that this opportunity and the characteristics of the area be utilized to maximum benefit of the area, the surroundings and the city.

Problems

1) Identification of and poor access into the area

2) Poor traffic and pedestrian circulation. New Gower Street and Harbour Drive are significant barriers.

3) Poor pedestrian access across thoroughfares. (Harbour Drive; Water St.; Duckworth St.; New Gower.)

4) Lack of organization of available parking; insufficient parking for existing density.

5) Lack of structure and focuses of activity in the area.

6) Poor quality infrastructures; roads, sidewalks, telephone/transmission lines.

7) Fragmented uses of ranges of land; vacant lots break up continuity of streetscapes; adds to lack of clarity in open space orientation.

8) Lack of sufficient mix of uses which would sustain a population use of the area at all times.

9) Very poor access to, as well as underuse of, the upper floors.

10) Deteriorating facades, upper floors, and other parts of buildings.

11) Lack of open spaces specifically designated for recreation; no public square in the downtown.

12) Lack of shelter for pedestrians.

Opportunities:

1) The back street nature of George St. as well as the short streets and lanes make it a good place for pedestrians.

2) The configuration of open spaces, buildings and topography provides an opportunity to establish linkages.

3) Vacant upper floors provide an opportunity for increased development.

4) Vacant lands provide opportunity for infill construction which will complete streetscapes/open space, increase development and provide better access to upper floors.

5) Stable commercial uses on Water Street provide a basis from which to encourage complementary uses.

6) Underused buildings can provide the right economic opportunity to promote renovation.

7) General architectural continuity provides for a cohesive basis upon which to build/infill/renovate. The architectural qualities of the buildings if exploited could be a major attraction.

8) Street orientation and topography has established a strong connection to the Harbour which should be reinforced.

9) Historic and contemporary vitality of the area.

10) The surrounding area has several functions which can beneficially reinforce the use of the study area as a place for entertainment and speciality shoppping.

11) The surrounding area has a sizable population that use the area for different purposes at different times of day. These people are within a 10 - 15 minute walk to the area.

12) The study area can be perceived as a focal point for downtown provided that the appropriate links are established.

4. Concept for Development

4.0 The first part of the concept is the extrapolation of objectives from the study of the area and the general urban design considerations. These relate to the problems and opportunities that have been identified by us and by the individuals and groups that have participated..

The second part describes the way the things that should be changed and those that should be kept the same and the ways of doing them in order to satisfy the objectives.

4.1 Objectives

* To provide an area in St. John's that is a distinctive people oriented place, thereby providing a 'choice' from other types of development in the city. The area is to be an attraction to residents and visitors.

* To improve and revitalize the character and environment of the St. John's retail core by fully developing its commercial retail, recreational and entertainment potential.

* To strengthen the economic viability and investment opportunity within the area.

* To strengthen the existing architectural characteristics by cleaning up existing buildings design guidelines and through the introduction of controls placed on new structures.

* To provide frequent well defined and convienent pedestrian access to the area.

* To link major land uses through a comprehensively designed pedestrian system. This system should address in a separate comprehensive development scheme the land north of New Gower Street.

* To improve the urban framework by upgrading infrastructure, public spaces and urban amenities.

* To expand use by different groups of people at different times.

* To reflect the history, characteristics, and growth to the present day, of one of North America's oldest cities.

* To take advantage of historical, natural and architectural features that exist in the area.

And, more specifically:

* The surrounding area will be new, large scale. The study area is old, small scale and traditional. These differences should be accentuated upon in the redevelopment of the area.

* New development should take place which enhances the economic viability, function and attractiveness of the area.

* Enhancement of the public spaces should link the area conceptually and functionally.

* The characteristics of individual buildings should be maintained by use of similar materials, fenestration patterns, massing, scale, etc.

* New buildings should contribute to the architectural 'stepping' by reflecting present ideals but relating to the predominant scale and materials.

* Entrances to the area should be improved and clarified.

* Pedestrian circulation should be improved and made more comfortable by shelters and linkages.

* Parking and automobile circulation should be clarified.

4.2 The General Concept

The general concept is to structure the area so as to increase activity and make it more enjoyable; an interesting place that will attract people which will encourage more investment which hopefully will improve the area, attracting more people and so on.

In context, this occurs at three organizational levels:

* Paths into and through the retail core area and its relationship to the rest of the downtown.

* Organization of the activities and uses within the area.

* Quality of the space in the area.

There are two use patterns: daytime and evening. During the day, existing and proposed surrounding development will attract people on the boundaries of the area. There needs to be activity and uses to pull them through on a casual basis. During the evening the area itself becomes the attraction. Both of these requires clarity of access and definition of the place so that it is regarded as a destination as well as having activity nodes within it.

The prototypical concept, figure 4.2.1 which is similar to that of a shopping mall shows an organization based on separated activity nodes with clear paths and subsidiary activities linking them. In the daytime, the office and commercial development provides the people, and activity is focused at the three main entrance Bishop's Cove, Beck's's Cove, and Harbour Drive. There are clear linkages between them.

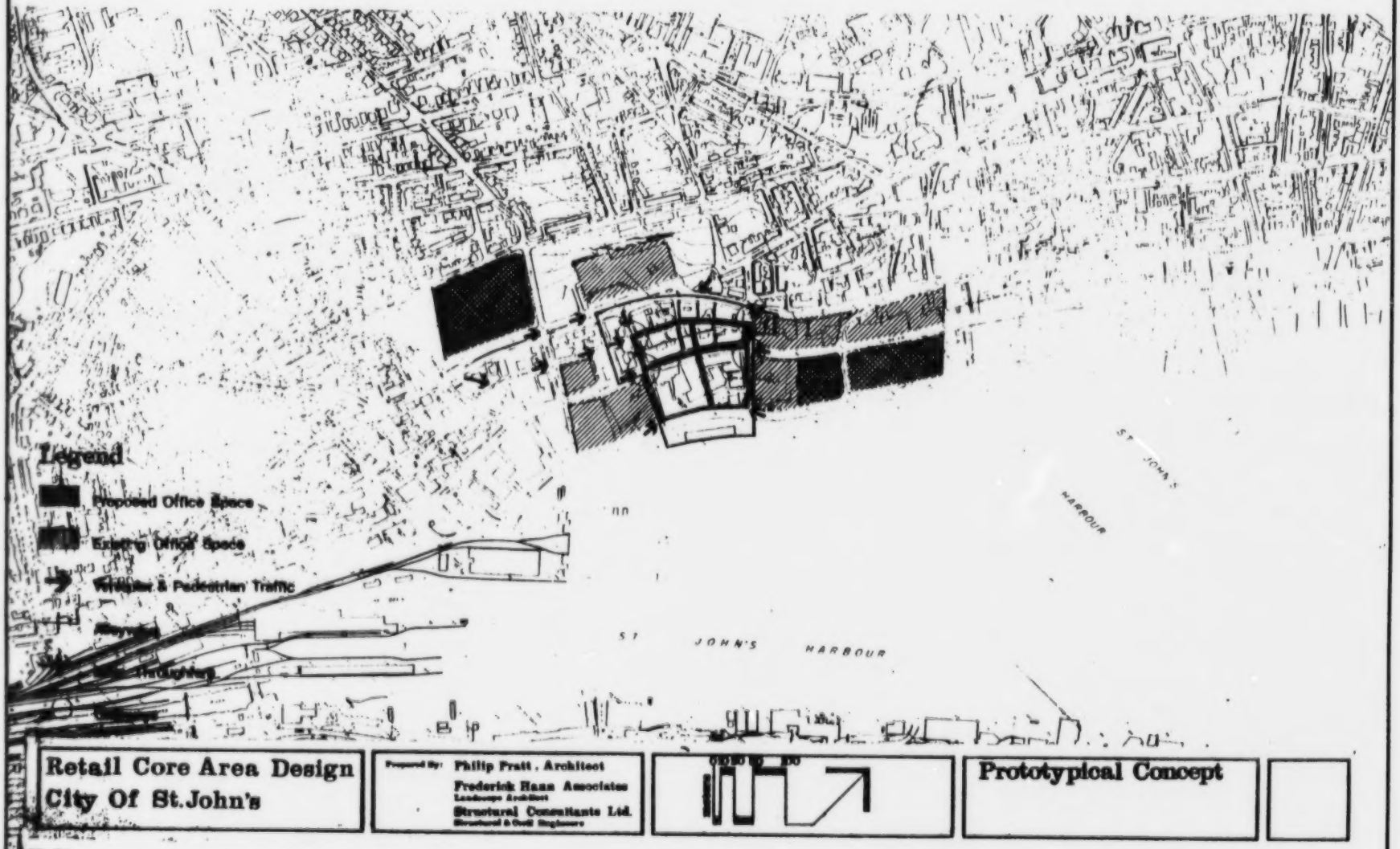


Fig. 4.2.1 Prototypical Concept

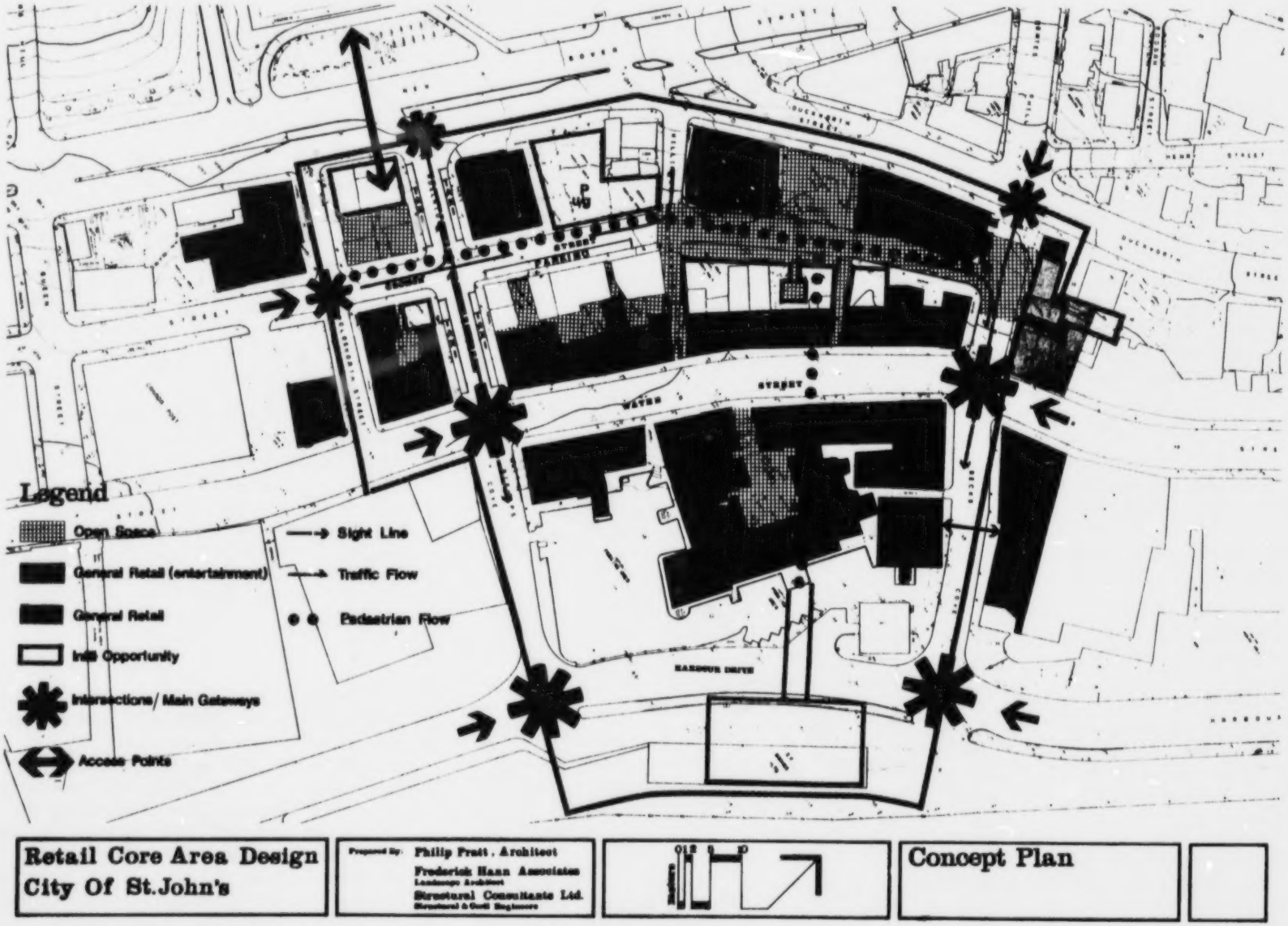


Fig. 4.2.2 The Concept Plan

The concept plan (fig. 4.2.2) shows the concept applied to this study area in more detail.

4.3 The Use Concept

The second level of organization is the types of uses and spaces within the area itself. In concept these are equivalent to the smaller stores in shopping mall. Many of these are attractions in themselves, but most depend, for mutual benefit on the passing trade. It is therefore necessary to balance these activities providing choices and alternatives.

The basis of the use concept is to recognize, reinforce and build upon the existing use patterns, primarily the entertainment function of George Street, the retail nature of Water Street and the general interest generated by the Harbour.

Uses should reinforce each other in several ways:

*There needs to be enough of a given activity so that the area is identified for this use.

*Activities should be attractive to different groups of people.

*Activities should attract people at different times of the day.

The uses that exist and have been suggested as appropriate for the area are varied, the two primary ones being entertainment and mixed retail. At present they have distinct areas that should be maintained. It is also necessary to improve the connections.

The uses must attract people as strong destination points and reasons for going to the area.

The existing pattern of George Street as entertainment and Water Street as retail service should be maintained. Links between the two should be improved.

The Waterfront should be developed as a focal point to help make the harbour a place where people can comfortably and safely watch harbour activities.

Suggestions and proposals have been made to strengthen or provide new activities so as to balance the existing. These include:

* *Restaurant* - More variety,is required, especially fast food and street oriented service.

* *Speciality Retail* - This should be especially crafts-oriented; some exists, but more would add to the identity of the area. They should, if possible, be concentrated in one area.

* *Craft/Studio* - This could utilize otherwise marginal space, could be accessible to visitors, and could have a marketing outlet.

* *Offices* - These utilize space not suitable for retail or entertainment. Some types of offices (i.e. architectural offices) are well suited to this type of area.

* *Fish & Produce Market* - This has been suggested by many people. The Bishop's Cove area is a traditional area. It could provide a very useful harbour related activity and be a major attraction during the whole day.

* *Theatre* - The need for alternative type of movie theatre in St. John's, catering to a more specialized audience has been suggested. George Street would serve as an appropriate location. A theatre would help provide variety to the existing use groups.

* *Residential* - This is a good subsidiary use in that its inhabitants are there in otherwise low activity times, and it can utilize presently unused space. The market would be specialized but should be strong for certain groups.

* *Seasonal* - Street vendors, entertainers and special events should be encouraged thereby increasing street activity.

4.4 Quality of the Space

The third level of organization is in the quality of the space of the buildings and the open areas. This is to be a people place, a place of entertainment, an alternative and an attraction to the city. It needs to be clean, organized, comfortable and interesting. It needs to be distinctive and have a definite identity as well as posses a rich texture within the city. This relationship is particular to the scale of buildings, the relationship of spaces and to the details of construction.

Because of the variation in age and use of buildings it is difficult to define a specific theme, and it is probably not necessary. What St. John's is, is a seaport that has developed and changed naturally for centuries and continues to do so. Individual buildings, while of basically similiar form, are different in detail. We want to keep this. The linking element is the open space. The horizontal surface or floor is important in the area's definition.

Architecturally it requires the maintenance of existing building forms and details, accentuating their characteristics. The mix of building ages provides an interesting mosaic, showing the development of the city. Of particular concern is the group of 19th century mercantile buildings, characterized by hipped roofs. It is necessary in the context of contemporary standards, to develop guidelines for renovations that will fully realize the essential characteristics of the older buildings and that will provide a framework for any new construction.

It will also be necessary to introduce elements that will open buildings onto the street for improved visual interest. Linking buildings and providing canopies will increase pedestrian comfort.

The open space, the horizontal surface, is crucial in the organization, interest and comfort of the area. At a primary level, the streets and sidewalks need to be improved introducing a texture that will give definition and linkage to the area.

Open spaces between buildings need to be developed for use by structuring their edges and opening them into surrounding buildings. There should be the provision for an open space serving as a square, the focal point for outdoor activity.

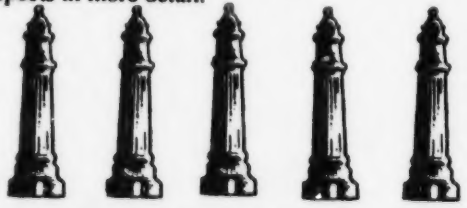
The introduction of urban design elements, of which vegetation, furnishings, lighting and small paths are all a part, will soften the quality of the space. Furnishings, urban designs, lighting,and railings, must have a timeless quality not specifically identified with one period.

Items should be incorporated that are to be looked at and laughed at, having no other function than to add some enjoyment.

4.5 The Master Plan (fig. 4.5.1)

The master plan shows graphically a development of the areas, public and open spaces. It shows at a conceptual level, the treatment of the streets and sidewalks, lanes and walkways and potential infill sites.

The next section develops some of these aspects in more detail.



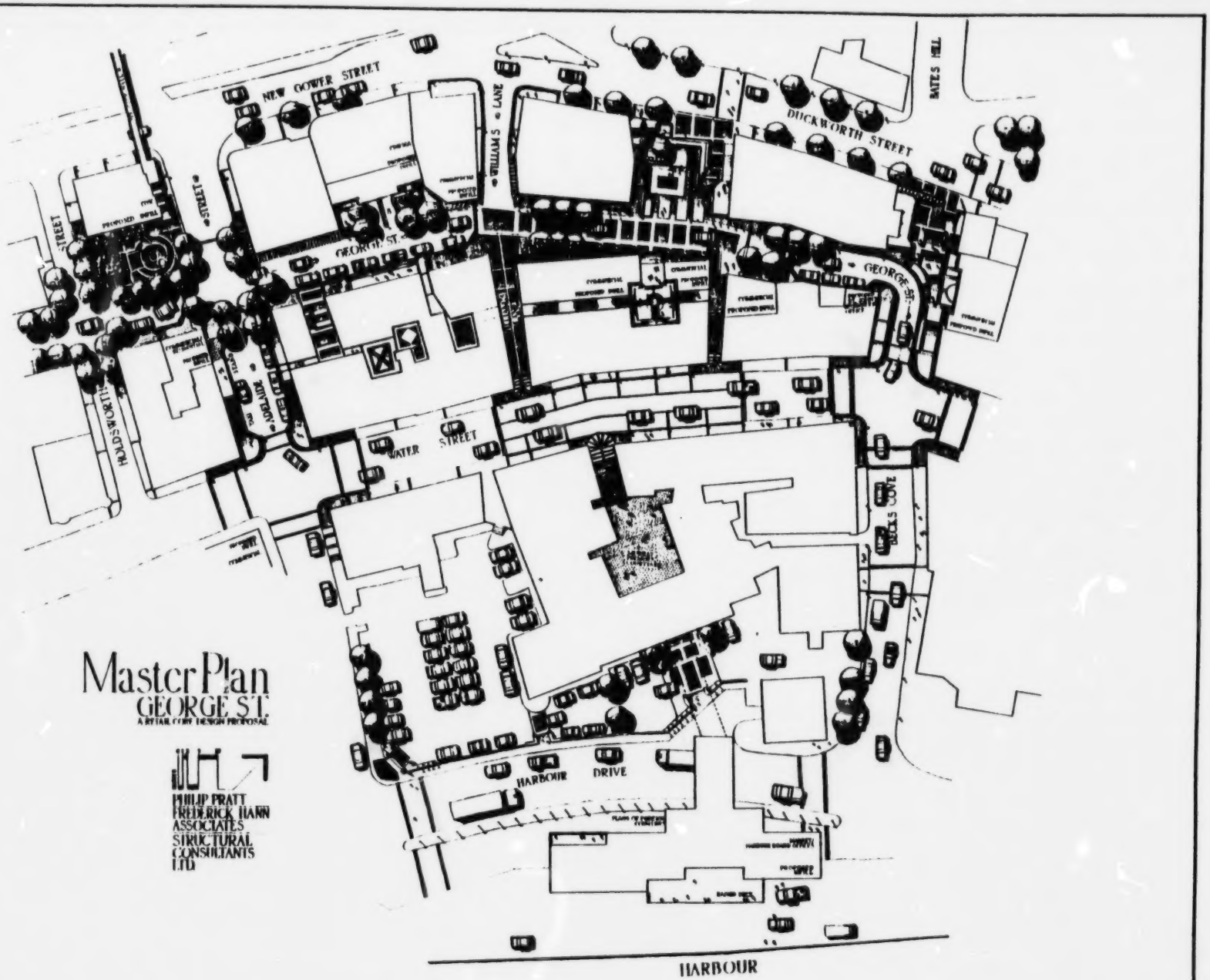


Fig. 4.5.1 The Master Plan

5. Design Development

5.0 This section is a further development of the concept plan in meeting the goals and objectives for the area.

While intended to be suggestive rather than specific, it shows in some detail the ideas, and how they can be acted upon.

It is not intended to replace the individual designer, more detailed design is required before construction of all elements, but to show the way, to be the guiding principles.

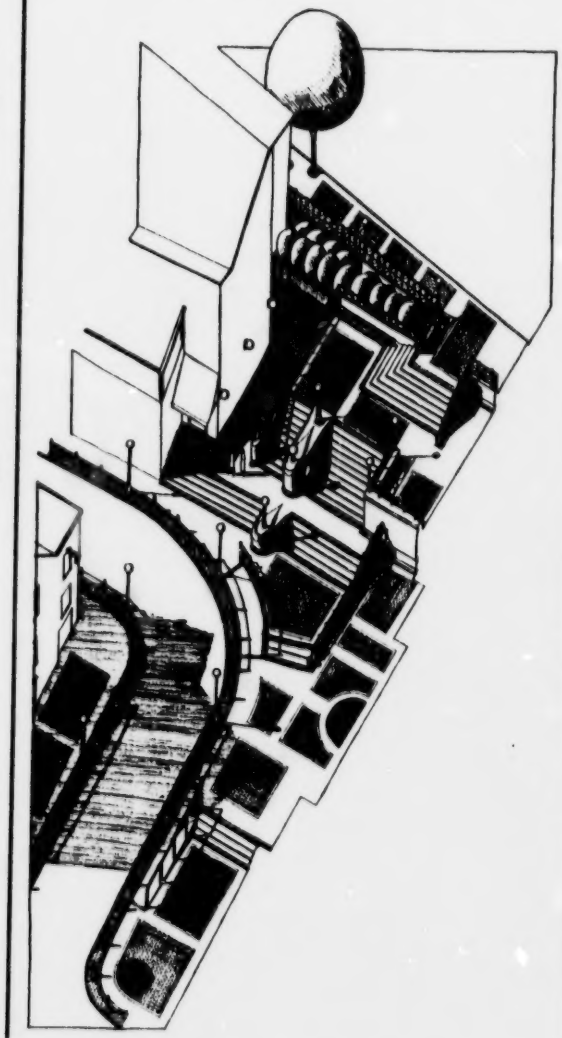
5.1 Open Space

Open space is defined as all land, both public and private, that is open, reasonably accessible to spontaneous activity as well as movement or visual exploration. Presently, most of the open space is poorly-utilized. One of the fundamental needs for the area is to provide interphases that link all activities with a common thread.

The area's potential will depend to a large measure on the extent to which it is possible to make provisions for people to stay. In this respect the quality of the surrounding is significant. The pedestrian paths must knit together the shops, bars, restaurants, cinema and services within a safe, comfortable and lively atmosphere. The open space elements that will be required involve the following: widening pedestrian paths leading to and within the area; planting trees, providing stairs, benches and niches for sitting; making all paved areas, (the walking-driving surfaces), diverse patterns and textures; opening street fronts of buildings to provide sidewalk displays of activities or goods where people might like to linger; providing a well-lit setting that tends to increase the intensity of pedestrian activity.

Special Projects

Beck's Cove and Steps: Fig. 5.1.1



This area is presently very important in that most of the users of George Street and Water Street enter the study area here. From Duckworth Street the "cove" provides a significant sight line to the Harbour and from the old City Hall site it is eastern axis of George Street. It is obvious that this area must be designed not simply to address the functional requirements of getting from Duckworth Street level down to Water Street or to accomodate entry to the various establishments but to be perceived as a significant "Place" within the study area. Wide graceful steps with landings have been designed to give people the opportunity to stop briefly to take in the scene or for sitting on when weather permits. Wrought iron railing, traditi .l light standards and a complex paving pattern with warm tones provide visual complexity to make the place interesting and comfortable by day and night.(fig. 5.1.1)

The Old City Hall Site

This site will be developed as the principal focal point for staging public gatherings out of doors. It is significant because of its location relative to both ends of George Street and as the intersection of sight lines and pedestrian circulation. It has the least climatic constraints. In fact it is the warmest section of the street because it is the least effected by wind. The size of the space has ideal proportions for it to be developed as a comfortable place for people to gather. It is large enough to accomadate market activities on the weekends. The square provides the public with a park setting in the midst of the downtown. It ties together the daily and nightly activities throughout the area.(fig. 5.1.2)

To create a unified setting and a strong visual anchor a suitable mixture of paving patterns extends from the square along the street and into the laneways. Perhaps the dominant feature in the square is the water that flows from sidewalk level on Duckworth St. to George St. level parallel to the main steps. Water in the landscape is to people

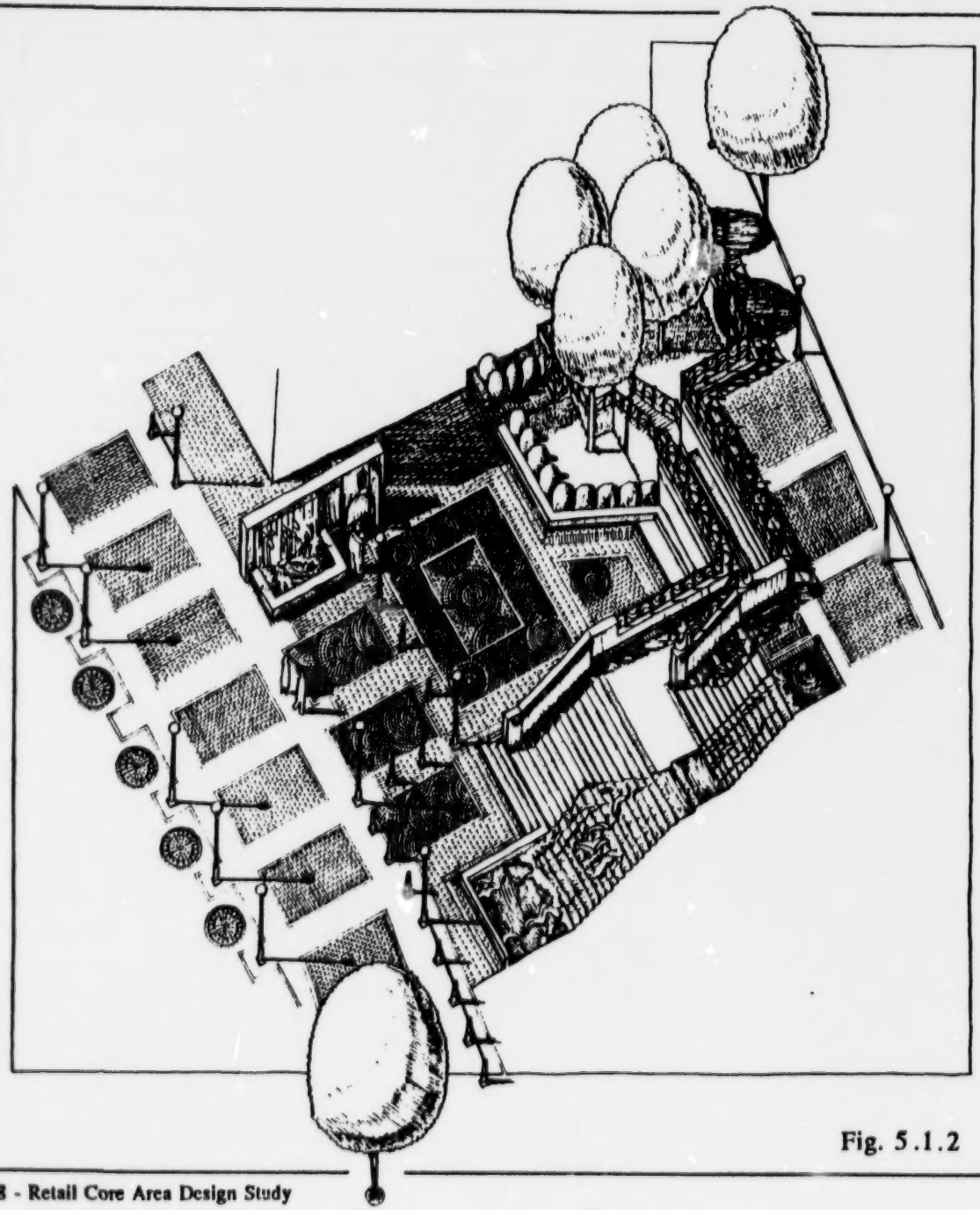


Fig. 5.1.2

as a magnet is to steel, an irresistable attraction. It's use in this setting is highly desirable and appropriate. In Scandinavian cities with climates not unlike St. John's there are several examples that attest to their feasibility. Within the water feature sculpture fish forms are mounted in the flow of water to give the impression of fish making their way up a river. On the opposite side of the square the waterfalls image is presented by water falling into a pool. Again fish forms are suspended in an illusionary impression. These elements are out of the ordinary for St. John's to say the least but they are important in that they amuse, remind, provoke and attract us. The images will add humor and play to the space, and without a doubt be regarded by the public as something of vallue.

Civic Park

The small Vest Pocket Park at the bottom of the skywalk steps opposite City Hall provides a pro nounced change from the sterility of the office environment on the north side of New Gower Street. (fig. 5.1.3) To the pedestrian entering the area from the west, the park acts as the western gateway presenting a warm and welcome feeling. In time, as the area to the west of Holdsworth Street is developed in a similiar manner, this park will function as the fulcrum point of George Street. It will reinforce the axis of City Hall and Harbour.

The scale of the park is small and intimate. Trees enframe the site, reduce the scale of the post office building and tie together the various elements of the surrounding environment. The ambience of the park is created by the shrubs and flowers, a small water feature and the diverse paving pattern that links the park to the adjacent sidewalk.

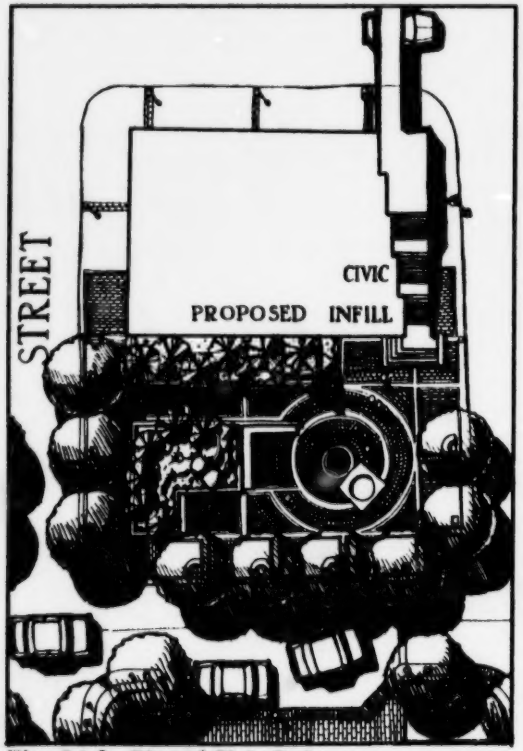


Fig. 5.1.3 Plan of Civic Park

5.2 Urban Design Elements

1. Paving - (fig. 5.2.1) The conceptual design called for a rich pattern and texture in the walking and driving surfaces throughout the study area. "The floor" is unquestionably the most powerful and natural element in the urban scene. It persuades, segregates, emphasizes, joins, divides, by surface pattern. The use of the floor in this manner is crystallized into shapes formed by differing colors or textures which indicate action. These will vary from the use of hazards (rough surfaces) to a connecting surface between and around buildings. If it is to do so it cannot be a neutral ribbon of asphalt or concrete flanked by pavements. It must be considered an equal partner with the buildings and by the nature of its levels, scale, texture and general propriety, produce the effect of sociability and homogenity.

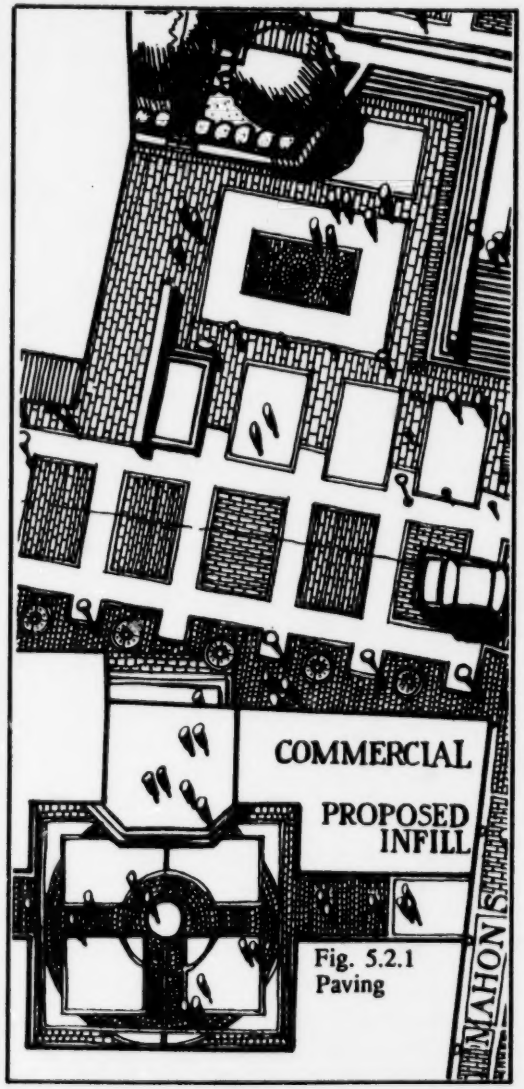


Fig. 5.2.1 Paving

Materials: The work the paving material must do means that they must have durability and weight. It imposes a certain discipline on the make up of the floor and it is this which gives to the floor its final character. The materials chosen for installation consist of concrete, brick, interlocking concrete paving units, impainted concrete giving a variety of patterns ranging from the square grid, running bond brick, the hexagon and cobbles. The granite paving stones, formerly the paving material on Water Street, will be reintroduced throughout the area. An ample supply of pavers can be found under the asphalt surface of Duckworth Street east. The poorest sections of asphalt on Duckworth Street should be removed to permit the use of the very valuable and expensive granite pavers.

2. Plant Materials: Plant material is proposed for a variety of locations throughout the study area. The material has been proposed to respond to a variety of specific needs; those are as follows:

* articulation of space
* traffic control
* softening architecture
*tying together various elements of the study area.
*bringing natural elements into the urban surroundings.

*controlling micro climate.

The urban environment imposes unusual stresses upon trees: soil composition, pollution, mechanical damage, restricted water and nutrients. As a result of these unfavourable conditions, the average tree lives only 12 to 18 years; too many die soon after installation. A tree's health can be greatly improved by maintenance programs, species selection and specialized planting techniques.

When detailed design is prepared for the various open space sections of the area it is advisable that the following criteria are considered prior to species selection:

Aesthetic/Functional Criteria

Scale at maturity
Structure of crown
Density of foliage
Growth rate
Seasonal attributes
Relation to surroundings
Texture
Special properties

Cultural Criteria

City tolerance
Hardiness
Local habit characteristics
Resistance to pests
Salt tolerance

Operational Criteria

Client requirements
Transplanting limitations
Maintenance requirements
Cost of transplanting (size)
Availability in suitable size

3. Railings, Planters, and Other Small Accessories (fig. 5.2.2)Decorative, delightful cast iron railings and ballustrades with steps and along walks.

- Cast iron, aluminum railings and planters, trash receptacles, tree grates and tree guards, can all be made to order.

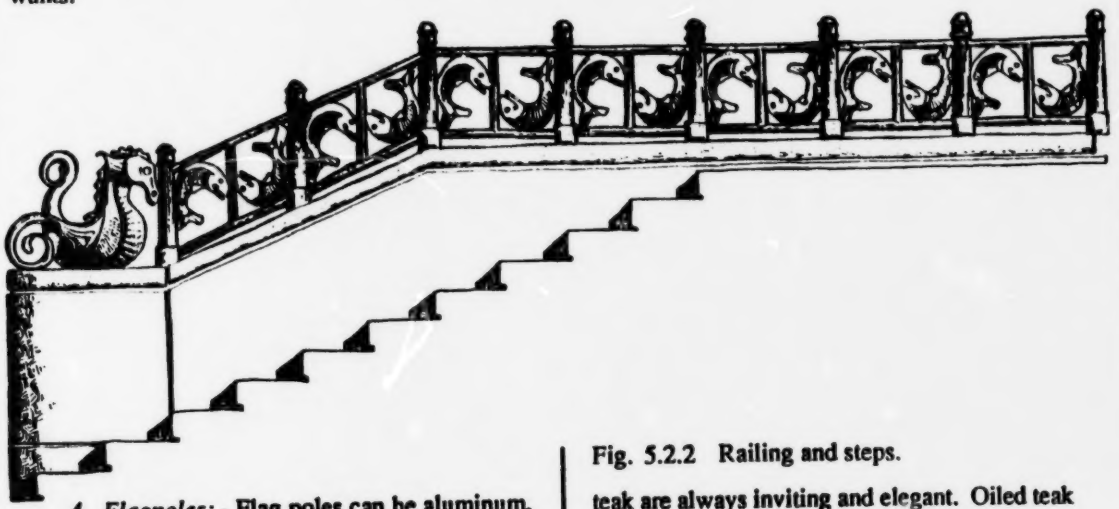


Fig. 5.2.2 Railing and steps.

4. Flagpoles: - Flag poles can be aluminum, steel, stainless steel or bronze and are available in cylindrical and tapered styles. Quality fittings and finishes are vital to a long lasting attractive pole. A wide variety of colors can be chosen from as well as a variety of heights from 15 - 50' on average The poles can be ground set, tilting, stationary or wall mounted, depending on need.

5. Information Kiosks; - Information kiosks should be carefully integrated with the rest of the landscape design so that they harmonize with the overall concept and become attractive elements rather than utilitarian objects.

Telephone kiosks must also sympathize with the rest of the street furniture and besides being functional must add to the intricate detailing found throughout.

6. Seating (fig. 5.2.3 Cast iron or cast aluminum benches with intricately patterned metal work and seats of maple, solid oak, or Brazilian teak are always inviting and elegant. Oiled teak tends to last longer than varnished wood.

- From a practical point of view such benches weather and wear better than average and are easy to remove and repair if bolted through at the base. They are available in a range of styles and colors.

- Plastic coatings on benches tend to wear out with time, exposed metal corrodes, ie. hollow steel sections with plastic caps.

- Planters and litter bins of equal quality design should be located near seating.

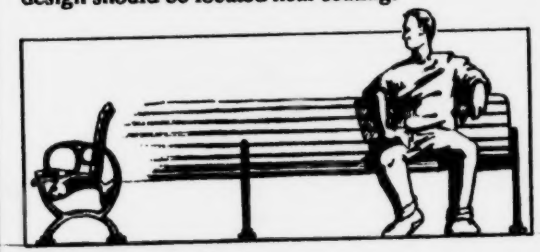


Fig. 5.2.3 Seating

7. Litter Bins: - Concrete litter bins can stain around weepholes at base and have gaps between wire baskets and surrounds.

- Wall mounted or bins attached to other furniture seem to be less vulnerable to damage than free standing or post-mounted.

- Metal fixing straps tend to rust.

- For concrete bins exposed aggregate finishes and some fine detailing would be preferable.

- Wooden bins; hardwood slats can be arranged in various ways around metal framing. This would be more appropriate for the area.

8. Lighting

Exterior fixtures will be an important element in the streetscape design both for the buildings and the open spaces. Especially since so much activity takes place in the evening and during the short winter days.

Exact lighting layout and selection of fixtures is a function of detail design, but the following considerations should be followed:

- Uplighting can be used to accentuate landscape forms at night and will produce striking contrasts between outline and horizontal backs.

- Downlighting for streets, plazas, courts and lanes will give high contrast between surfaces above and below and as well will highlight details,

- Diffuse lighting or flood lighting is used simply to make objects visible and would prove rather bland and useless in the downtown area where detail, texture and warmth are required.

- Shadowing and texture lighting through spot lighting might be usefull but must be limited to only a few selected areas where such drama becomes interesting.

- Silhouette lighting again should be regulated but can be exciting in some areas of open space.

- Bounce lighting off faces would be a good way of filling in spaces between the more direct light sources.

General Lighting

- Pole height and spacing is important to successful illumination of specific areas both for defining forms and revealing objects in the environment.

- It is vital that the poles are high enough to reduce vandalism but low enough to reveal textures and details around them.

- Appropriate sizes of posts and bollards must be carefully reviewed.

- Period style posts and bollards will lend historic reference and cohesion to the street scene.

- Single lamps are best suited along streets and pedestrian pathways and in plaza areas. Low pressure sodium lamps emit only orange light and foliage thus appears black. Tungsten lighting is warm in color and random in composition without the strobe effect. The one criticism is that low voltage incandescant lighting has a shorter life span. Mercury vapor lamps like sodium lamps do not highlight foliage and lack a purity of color.

Fluorescent lamps are adaptable, available and provide good color but are short lived.

Incandescant, low voltage fixtures would be a highly suitable choice for the George Street project because of the safety factor, availability, color purity, and adaptability, as well as their ability to define the surrounding landscape. Finally there are available a variety of color lenses and filters which can add even more flexibility to the system.

- Pole mounted triple and quadruple lamps will provide both higher levels of lighting and add character to street intersections.

- These lights are appropriate at street corners or pedestrian intersections where nodal points require increased definition.

Fig. 5.2.4
Light pole with single globe.
Triple and Quad lamps.

Amenity Lighting

- Wall Mounted globe style lamps with richly moulded ornamental mounts would prove attractive additions to the overall lighting shceme.

- This lighting technique will add visual interest to an otherwise bland wall as well as bring

needed illumination to lanes and alleys where pole mounts aren't practical.

- Again low voltage incandescent lighting would be most suitable for the purposes of wall mounts such as these.

5.3 Architecture

The discussion of the open space design relates primarily to new elements which are to be introduced into the area. This section primarily deals with ways of maintaining and inhancing the existing buildings. There are sections on renovation guidelines, signage, infill guidelines, sample studies of linkages, use of upper floors and a selection of possible private infill projects.

The object is to find ways within a contemporary context of maintaining and enhancing the original characteristics of the different building types in the area and suggest innovative possibilities for use of space. (fig. 5.3.1)

It is not the objective of this to make the area into a museum but rather to encourage owners and designers to work with and appreciate the qualities of their own and surrounding buildings.

Exterior Renovation Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to aid in the proper renovation of facades (fig. 5.3.2, 5.3.3). It is not necessarily a complete list and design, variation is possible, but in general it should be adhered to.

1) Do not change the characteristic form of the building, expecially the roof.

2) Original exterior materials should be maintained if at all possible.

3) Window form and type should be maintained.

4) Detailing around the windows, doors and corners of buildings should be maintained.

5) Renovations to exterior should involve the entire building skin and not a single level or side.

6) Colors should harmonize with detailing to clarify features and with neighbouring buildings.

7) Building groupings should be viewed together so that new renovation will compliment and not overpower qualities already present.

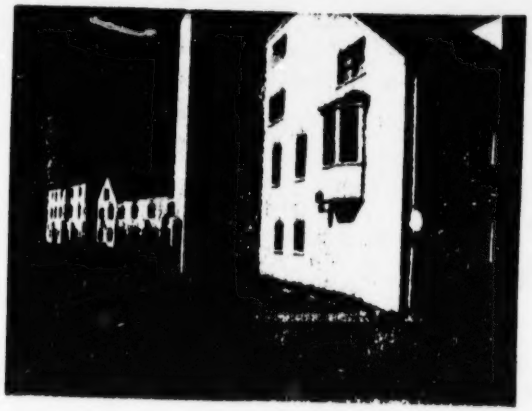


Fig. 5.3.1 Contemporary renovation.

8) Do not use "fake materials". These include:

- Antique Brick
- Vinyl and metal clapboard
- Stone veneer
- Applied log slabs

9) No fluorescent or garish colours.

10) Do not change building materials on the exterior skin except for storefronts. The sides should be the same as the front.

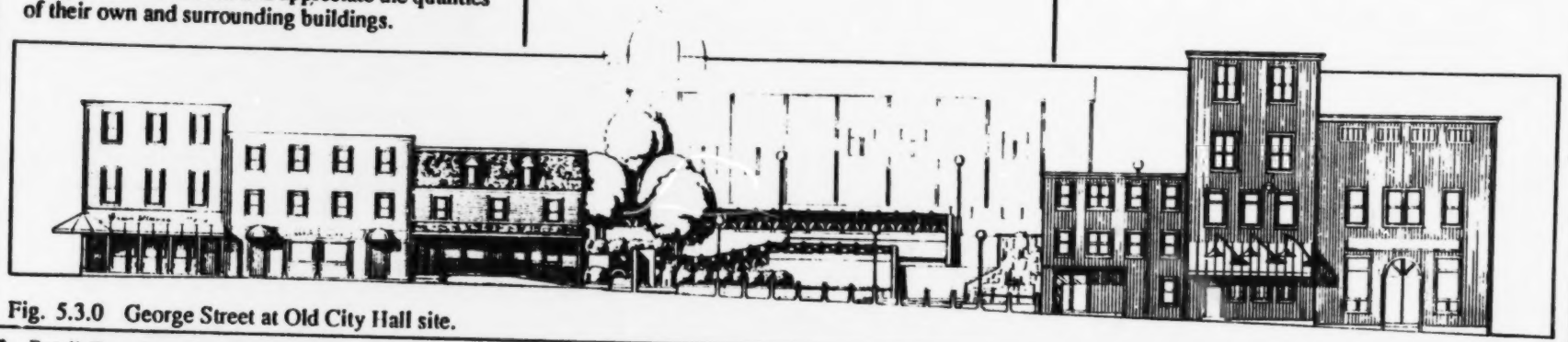


Fig. 5.3.0 George Street at Old City Hall site.

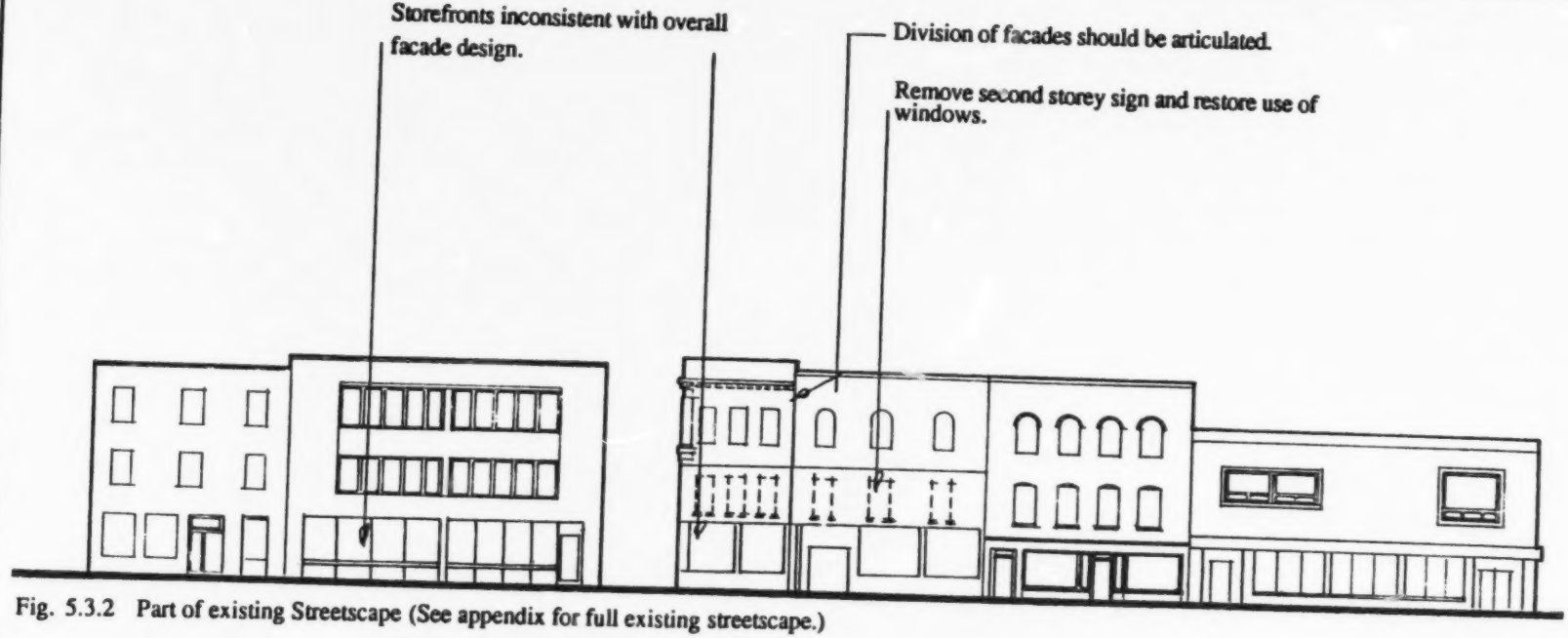

Storefronts inconsistent with overall facade design.
Division of facades should be articulated.
Remove second storey sign and restore use of windows.

Fig. 5.3.2 Part of existing Streetscape (See appendix for full existing streetscape.)

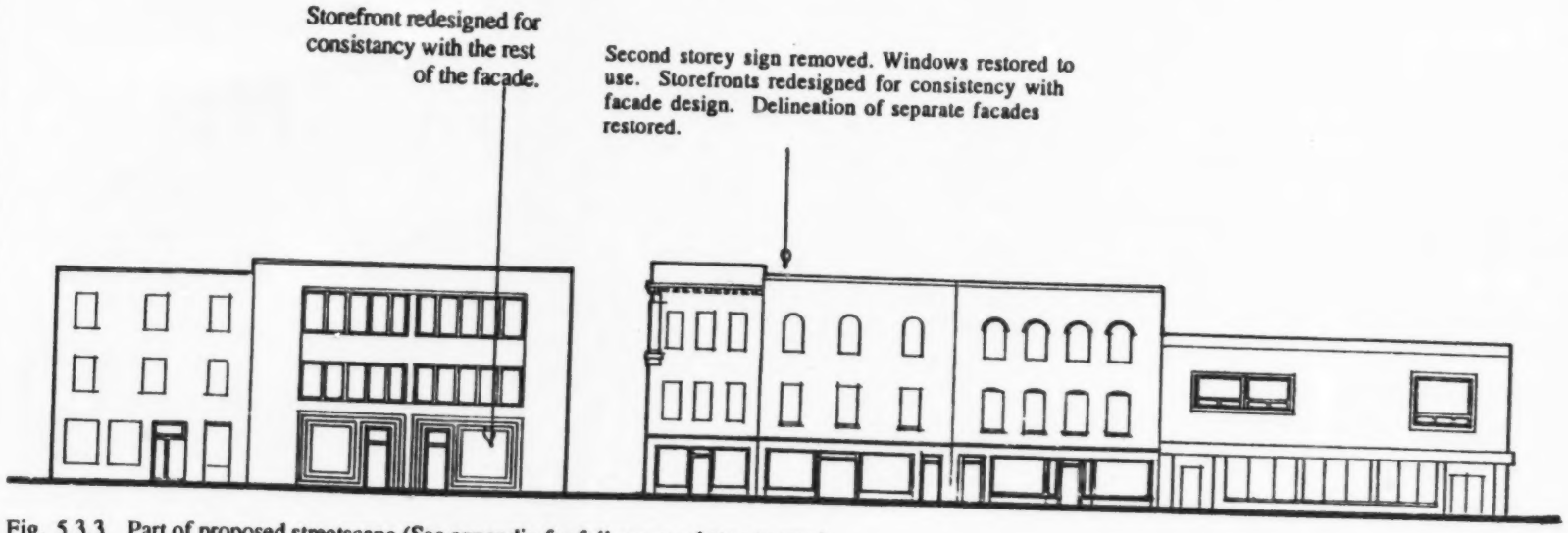

Storefront redesigned for consistancy with the rest of the facade.
Second storey sign removed. Windows restored to use. Storefronts redesigned for consistency with facade design. Delineation of separate facades restored.

Fig. 5.3.3 Part of proposed streetscape (See appendix for full proposed streetscape.)

11) Avoid shiny materials or materials inconsistent with the characteristics of the building such as unpainted aluminum, plastics, glazed tiles.

Store Fronts: Store fronts are a part of the building that require special attention. It is the area that is most vulnerable to abuse, most visable and the area most often changed. It is possible to renovate the storefronts using new materials such as aluminum, although in reality, wood, which is generally the original material, is very durable. The drawings show graphically some of the considerations which should be followed. (see figs. 5.3.4 - 5.3.6A)

In general it is necessary to follow the details, opening sizes, pediments, pilasters and mouldings. Apart from being the traditional pattern, there are some practical considerations. The detail texture attracts attention of pedestrians and serves to reduce negative impact of deterioration.

The pilasters and pediment which are a part of the store front serve as a visual support for the building above and define the store front within the facade.

Wood frame buildings with clapboard sideing have some particular requirements. In addition to those previously listed:

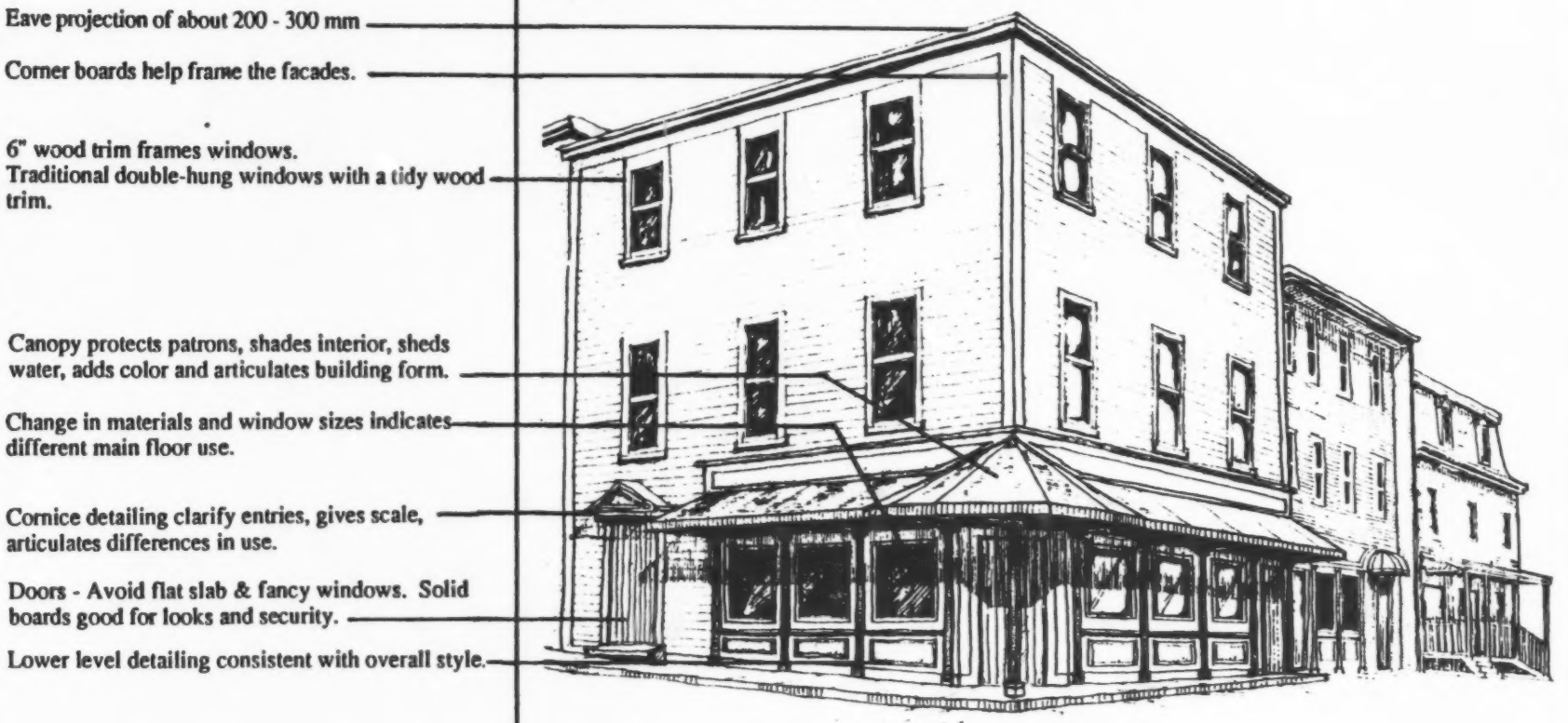
1) The siding should be wood, 4" exposure.

2) 6" cornerboards should be installed around windows and doors and at corners.

3) Drips above and below windows, and other traditional elements of construction should be installed.

These characteristics are shown in fig 5.3.0 which also shows a group of buildings renovated with industrial metal siding.

Fig. 5.3.4 Woodframe Renovation Guidelines


Eave projection of about 200 - 300 mm
Corner boards help frame the facades.
6" wood trim frames windows.
Traditional double-hung windows with a tidy wood trim.
Canopy protects patrons, shades interior, sheds water, adds color and articulates building form.
Change in materials and window sizes indicates different main floor use.
Cornice detailing clarify entries, gives scale, articulates differences in use.
Doors - Avoid flat slab & fancy windows. Solid boards good for looks and security.
Lower level detailing consistent with overall style.

Neighbouring buildings must harmonize with one another.

Sympathetic multicolored paint schemes further clarify architectural features (cornice, panels, pedimented windows).

Cornice work and projecting details, besides proving aesthetic relief, help shed water and protect building faces.

Building sides should carry the same emphasis on detailing as do the facades.

Siding carried around corners for depth.

Screened lighting washing off the building faces and illuminating the corners increases the prominence of this break in the streetscape.

Original rooflines accent building style and add variety to roofscape.

Parapet cornice at roofline announces end of building.

Projecting pilasters give scale and define building edges.

Pleasingly rythmical double hung windows at 2nd and 3rd levels.

Pilasters at lower level supporting ground level cornice distinguish storefront from upper levels.

Transoms over doors give height to otherwise ill-proportioned entries. Plywood and mouldings can create similar effect without use of glass.

Inset entries are more inviting and provide increased glass area.

Bulkheads give firm base for glazing above.

Awnings and canopies enhance building facades, signal pedestrian ways and link buildings creating places out of open spaces.

Fig. 5.3.5A
Existing condition - Water Street at at the Murray Premises

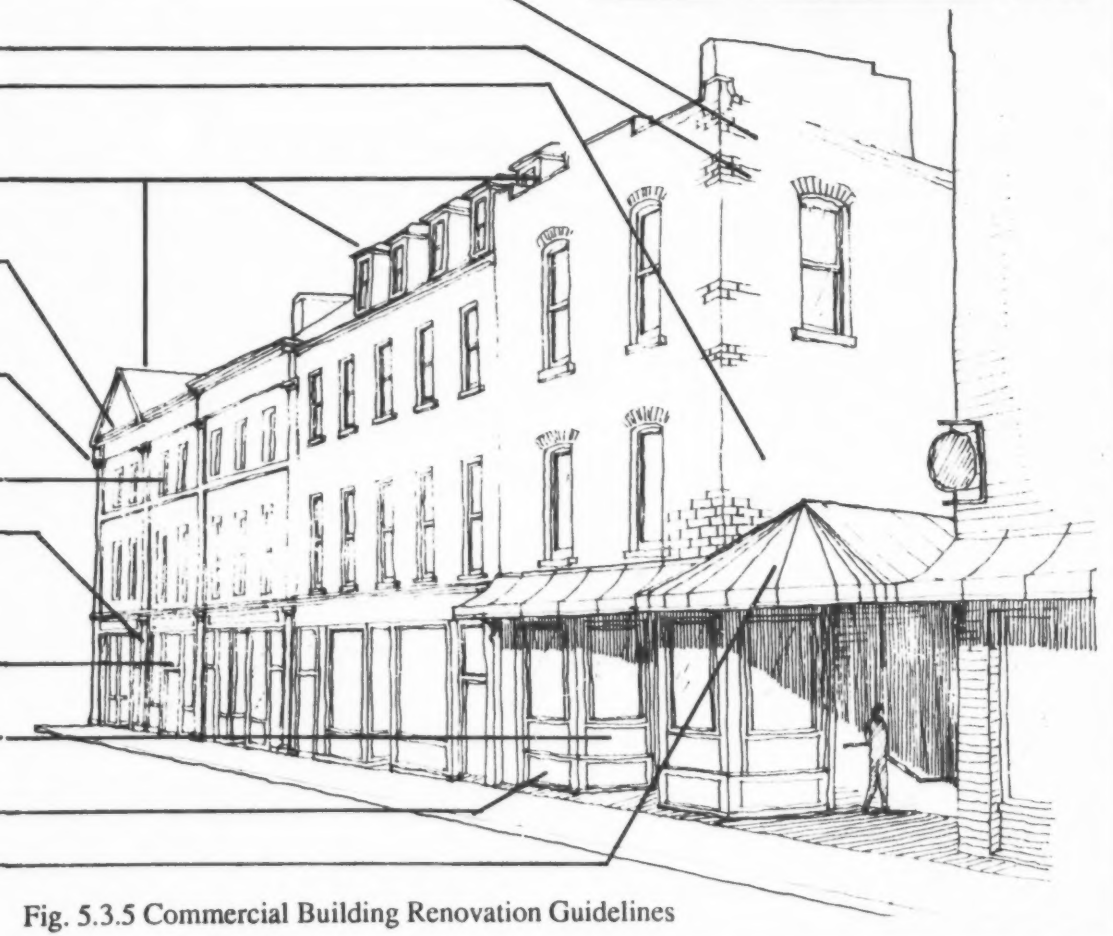


Fig. 5.3.5 Commercial Building Renovation Guidelines

Damaged or inadequate roofing shingles should be replaced.

Flashing details are invaluable for protecting building faces from water damage.

Replacement details are less prone to decay if they are accessable and uncomplicated.

Clogged or broken eaves, troughs, should be repaired.

Rotting wood should be replaced.

Masonary joints must be repointed.

Wooden areas should be protected with impermeable materials such as painted allumium and galvinized flashing, masonry with canted plasticized mortar.

Keep original material surfaces free of grime buildup and maintain the existing surface without adding layers of paint.

Face brick should be cleaned with bristle brushes and non-ionic detergents or low pressure water cleaning on more difficult jobs but never sandblast.

Heavy dirt should be chemically removed but test spots are required.

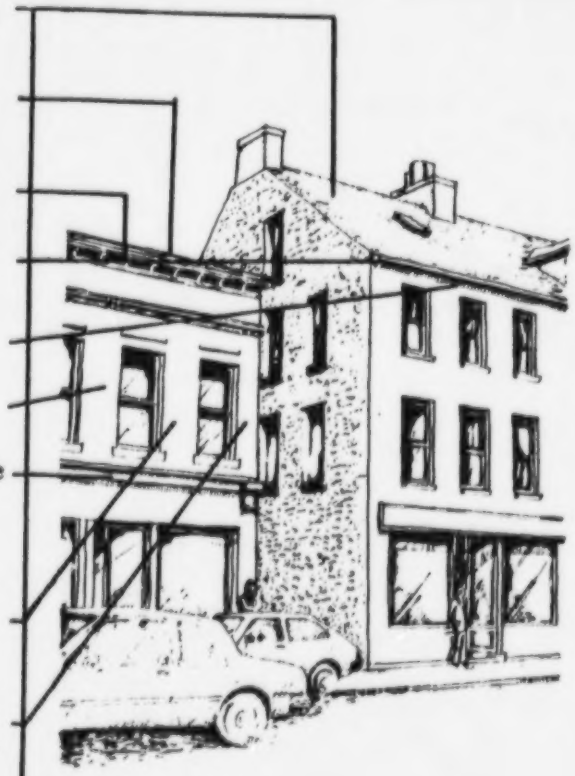


Fig. 5.3.6 Building Cleaning and Maintanence

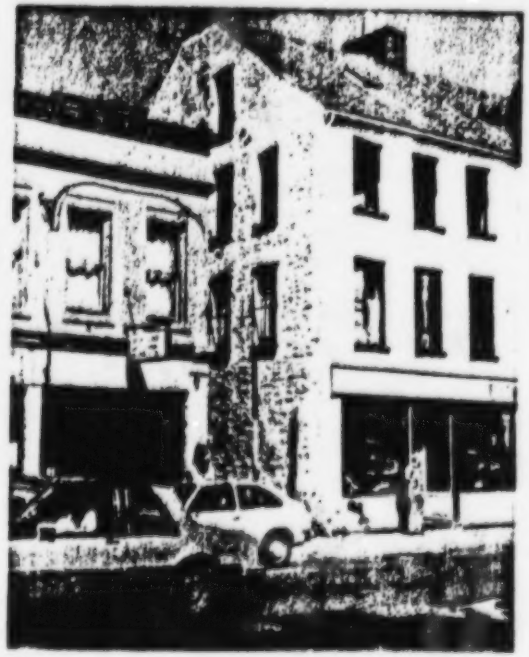


Fig. 5.3.6A Existing conditions - Water Street at Mahon's Lane

Cleaning and Maintenance:

- Strip off metal and vinyl surfaces that may disguise maintenance problems

- Reapply previously existing cornice and pediments with adequate flashings

- Use the services of professional building exterior cleaners.

- Sheet metal and cast iron should be properly painted to prevent corrosion. Rust and paint buildup can be removed chemically or by low pressure dry-grit blasting.

- Mortar moxes for masonry repointing should match original in color and consistency, if in doubt use less cement in the mix so that moisture will definately evaporate and no spalling will occur. Too high a cement content in mortar can even crack the softer stone or brick it binds.

-Buildings are best cleaned during summer months when there is no possibility of frost damage to masonry which requires water saturation to remove cleaners.

-Use only breathable type masonry paint to prevent surface spalling.

-If brick is repainted a light cleaning prior to painting will improve bonding.

- Use milled lumber matching orginal when replacing wood details.

-Gloss surfaces weather better than low-lustre finishes on wood.

-The architectural features of a building can be effectually highlighted through a pleasant harmonious paint scheme.

Infill Guidelines

Infill construction is the process of building new structures into an existing context. The infill must relate to the surroundings. (fig. 5.3.7)

The renovation guidelines specifically discuss the detailing and cohesive design of buildings for restoration and adaptive reuse. In a sense the same rules apply to infill construction because the detailing and design of the existing buildings and streetscapes is the context for new construction. None the less, new buildings should be new and not just an imitation of old forms. The area's architectural mosaic spans over 140 years of building style and design. New buildings should express the 1980's part of that mosaic.

1) Height - Infill should relate not only in the number of storeys but in the actual heights of storeys and buildings. New buildings should be no higher than the highest of its immediately adjacent neighbors.

2) Materials - Should be the same as adjacent buildings or part of the existing streetscape rythm.

3) Openings - The mass/void relationship and fenestration pattern should be consistent with its neighbors and the existing streetscape rythm.

4) Form - The main determinant of the image of a building is its form and in particular its roof form.

5) Details - How materials are applied to the surface texture of a building is important to emphasise a rich pedestrian oriented texturing in the detailing of new construction.

6) Innovation - Architects should be encouraged to look for innovative methods of intergrating buildings, opening them into the street and linking other buildings.

Signs

Signs are important to attract, direct and inform people about the area and the premises. It is to everyone's benefit if good design (fig. 5.3.8, 5.3.9) principles apply and that they are appropriate to use and location. If everyones signs are the same, then all are equally visible, in fact they can be more visible.

The drawings (fig. 5.3.10,11,12) illustrate most of the principles to be applied to sign design but the following guidelines should be followed.

Size - Should be appropriate to the location, generally fitting within the band at the top of the store front or hanging with approximately the same area.

Illumination - Absolutely no flashing signs and interior illuminated signs should be discouraged.

Location - They should be visable to the pedestrian and the automobile at close range.

Fig. 5.3.7 Part of proposed streetscapes.

New extensions and reconstruction may only be as tall as the tallest building immediately adjacent.
Replace gable roof and dormers to increase development potential. Opportunity for linking with infill at rear of building on George Street and increasing access to upper floors.

Fig. 5.3.8 Existing erractic signage.

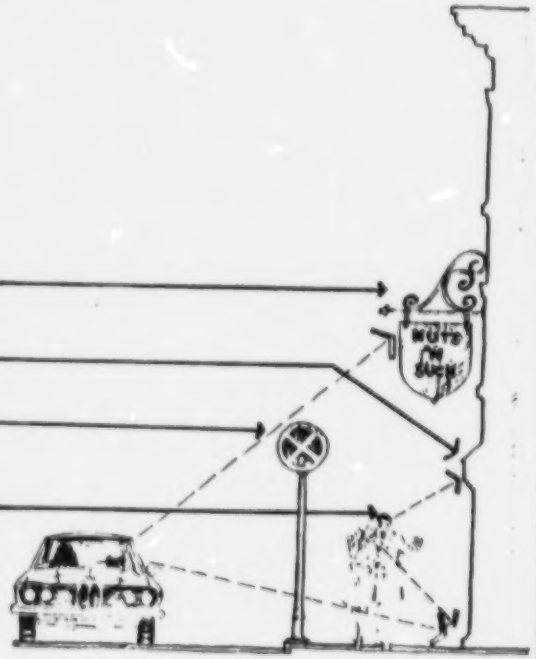
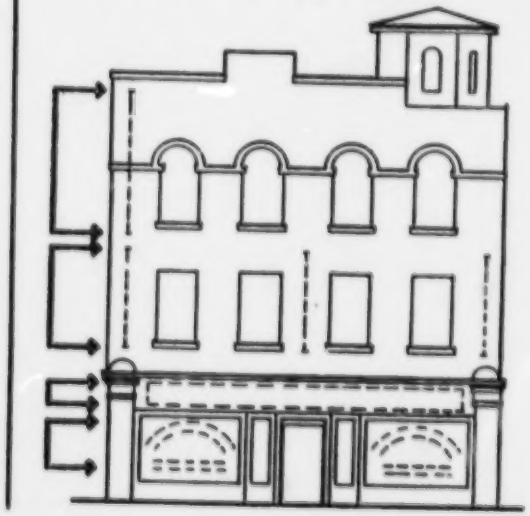

Upper facade signage. Appropriate to age and style of building.
Lower cornice signage.
Traffic signs are appropriate size, permanently fixed, city issued.
• Viewing angle for driver is greater than for pedestrian. Signs should be placed in positions appropriate to both viewing angles.

Fig. 5.3.9 Signage location.



Banners

Buildings where the architectural detail does not suggest the use of conventional permanent signs or small-scale spaces between buildings that would be overpowered by fixed illuminated signs, are particularly appropriate for "soft" signing by banners.

Choice of colour is important and can act either as a subtle counterpoint to existing building materials brown banners and white lettering against soft brown brick or to attract attention in pink, purple, orange and grey.

Signs announce business function. Oversized signs become too dominant; simple, clear, attractive, durable, properly placed signs, are more effective. Once a sign is recognised other factors become important. It is important to avoid visual clutter. Some basic conditions, consistent quality, high colour contrast, simple lettering.

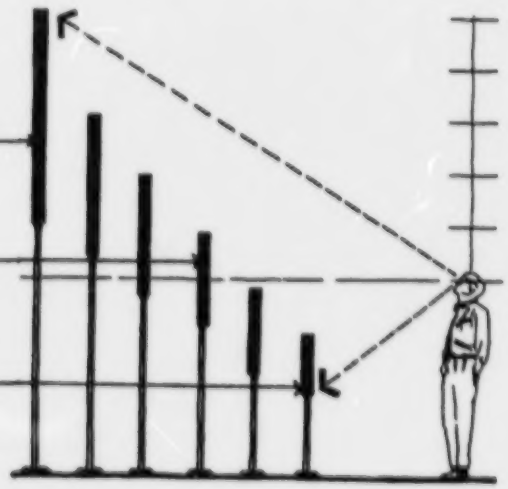
First Floor Fascia Signs

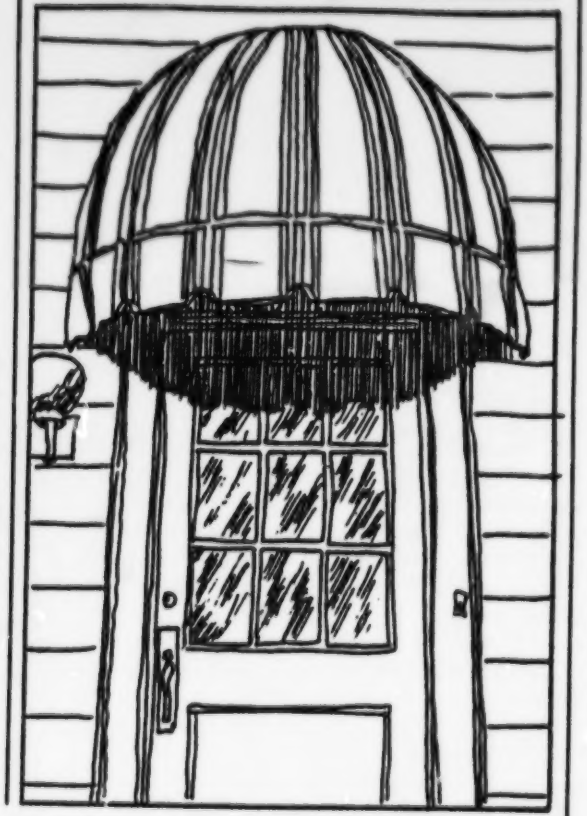
The dimensions and design of fascia board are of critical importance to the sucess of a shopfront. Length of the fascia sign should be carefully handled to avoid overbearing or inarticulated horizontal emphasis.

The design of window signs should respect the overall size of the window and the age of the building.

Sign height, size, location and style is dependent on viewer, message and relationship to neighbouring signs.

Fig. 5.3.10 Signage perception.


Large scale signage appropriate for fast moving traffic.
Public signs for viewers standing close should be large
Small signs appropriate for misc. notices etc.



Awnings

Fabric awnings are an important functional and visual ingredient of commercial building facades. (fig. 5.3.13) Awnings identify storefronts and protect customers from heat and rain, while preventing displayed merchandise from fading and store interiors from becoming too hot. They soften the harshness of a commercial street and create a more inviting and lively atmosphere. Their materials add elements of color and design that can look new and fresh as well as historically appropriate. Their alternatives, mansards with wooden shakes or aluminum canopies, cannot offer this same visual quality and are more expensive to erect.

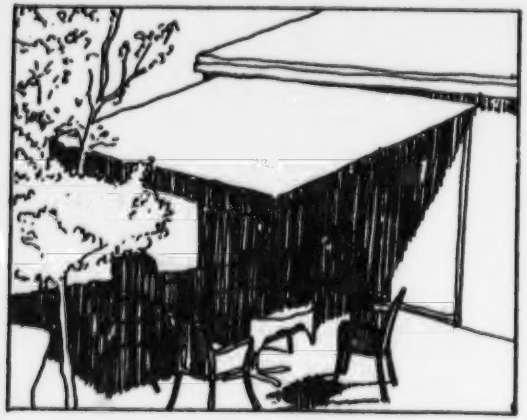


Fig. 5.3.13 Awning Applications

In a downtown revitalization project, awnings play an important role in establishing the image of individual stores and the downtown as a whole. When properly coordinated, the colors and designs can complement the streetscape, helping to present a more cohesive feeling.

(P. 62 National Trust for Historic Preservation, c. 1981)

Fig. 5.3.11

Water Street - showing appropriate use of signage, banners, lighting and awnings.

5.4 Sample Studies

The traditional use of the upper floors of many of the buildings in the area was as residences, usually for the owner of the store beneath. In recent years, this use has declined and many of the upper floors are vacant or under used because retail or service space is usually not successful above the first floor.

There are several approaches that can help make better use of this space.

1) Introduce uses that are acceptable above the first floor including residential and office use.

2) Improve the linkages and access so that the space can be used for retail/service/ or entertainment.

While each building must be considered in detail certain qualifications can be made.

1) Zoning in the area, generally allows the types of mixes of use that we are proposing.

2) Building code requirements for the mixed uses are more stringent than for single uses. In particular, the requirements for exits, and for fire separations. While these are fairly straight forward their application to renovations of existing buildings frequently is difficult.

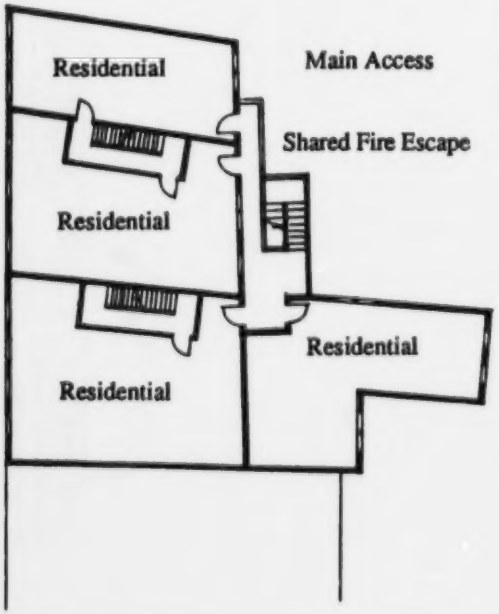
3) Linkages between buildings and in some cases use of upper floors usually requires cooperation between different owners. This is not always possible.

4) Care has to be taken to avoid incompatible mixes such as residential immediately over loud activity.

The following examples illustrate the concept of linking:

Residential use in particular is desirable in that the demands on the area infrastructure are out of phase with commercial uses. This has the benefit of sharing facilities such as parking, putting people in the area during otherwise slack periods, providing potential market for retail and services. (fig. 5.4.1)

Because of the type of area, the residential use will likely appeal to a specialized market, particularly young and single.



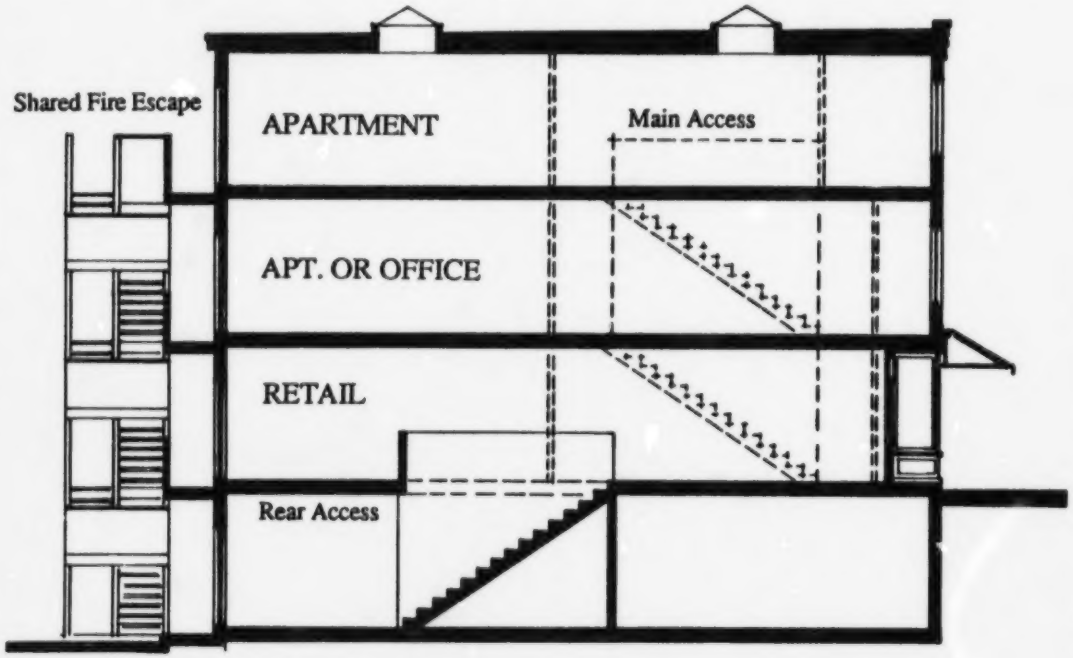


Fig. 5.4.1 Residential Use of Upper Floors

Linkages

The potential for linking buildings and different levels is very strong, particularly because of the change of grade.

While there can be organizational problems, the benefits to the owner and public can be large, providing more traffic for stores and more shelter and choice for the public.

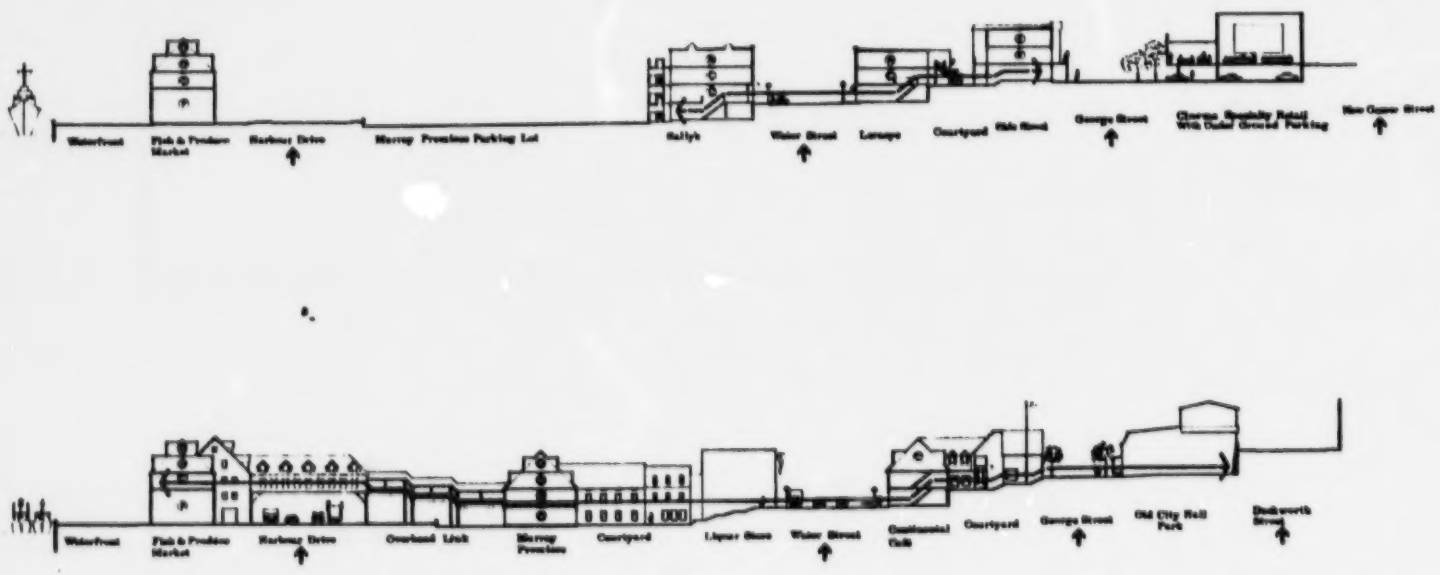
The potential is strongest between the buildings on the North Side of Water Street, (fig. 5.4.2) and George St. but exists all the way from the Harbour to George St. (figs. 5.4.3 & 5.4.4)

5.5 Infill Opportunities

The need for diversifying use in the area and some possible candidates were identified earlier in the report. There are as well several sites which are suitable for infill (fig. 5.5.1).

This section identifies potential use for the sites. For most there have been preliminary indications of interest from property owners, but it must be emphasized that these, while desirable, are suggestions only.

- Beck's Cove at the end of George Street between Nonia and T.G.I.F. (fig. 5.5.2) - street oriented speciality drygoods retail with pedestrian



Legend

- (O) Office
- (C) Commercial
- (P) Public Use - Leisure Market
- (R) Residential
- (E) Bar and Restaurant

Retail Core Area Design
City Of St.John's

Site Sections

Fig. 5.4.3 & 5.4.4 Site Sections

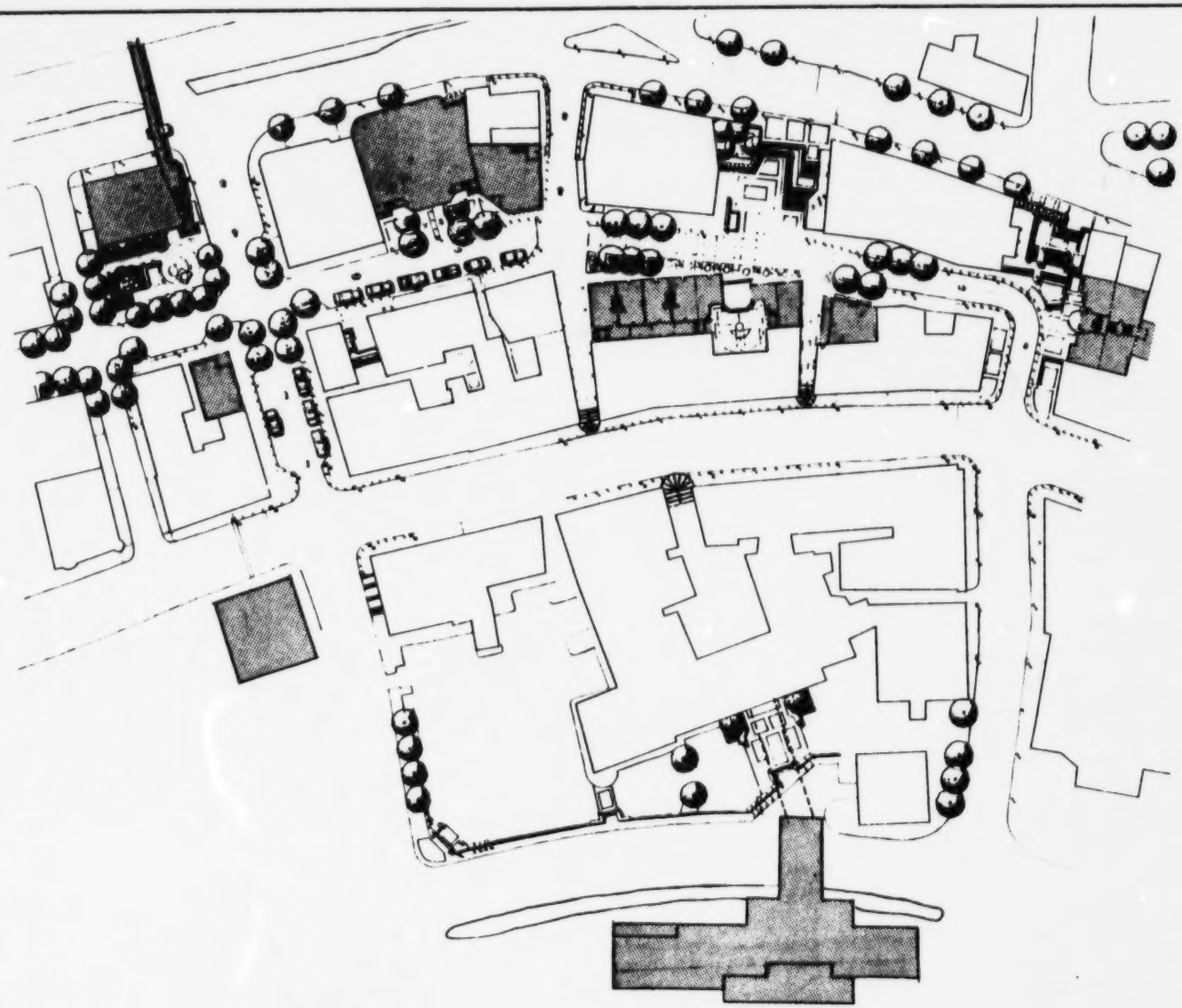


Fig. 5.5.1 Infill Sites

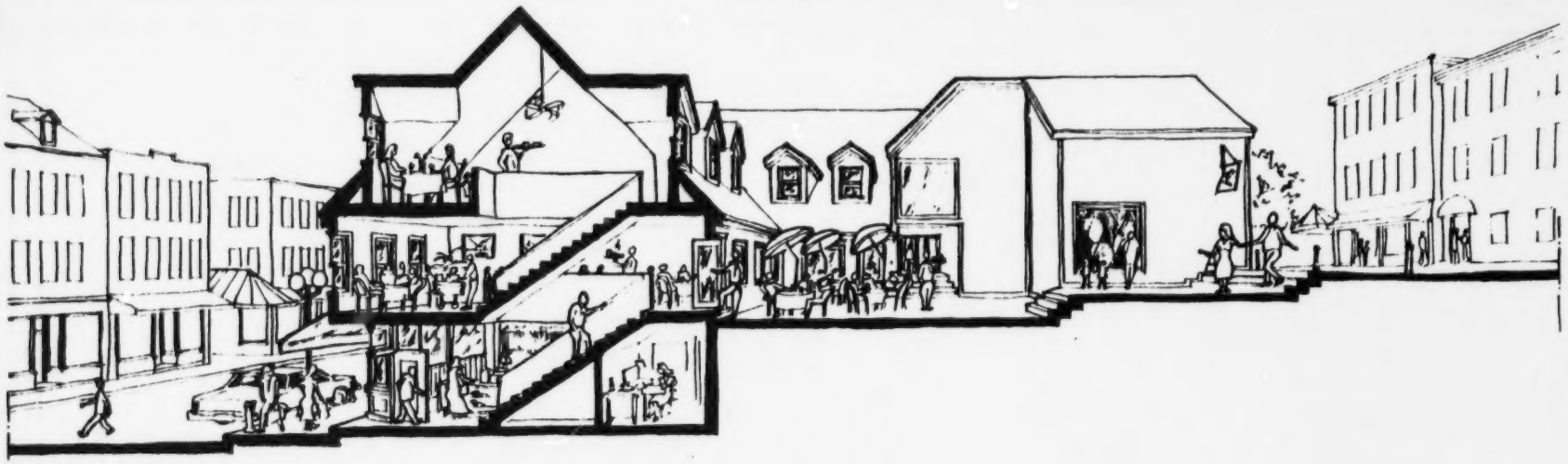


Fig. 5.4.2 Linkages

circulation through the building to create access to upper floors of buildings on Water Street. The architecture should respond to the vernacular context and to its position as the terminus of the George St. view plane.

- George Street at Mahon's Lane - Rear of Footwear Supplies. (fig. 5.5.3) This site offers the potential for new construction opening onto George Street and accessing the presently undeveloped upper floors of Footware Supplies. The design should pay particular attention to the gable roof form of the building.

- George Street across from old City Hall site (fig. 5.5.4) - Street oriented food and retail. This grouping of small buildings would replace some of the delapidated sheds and vacant space at the rear of buildings on Water St. The architecture would be reminisent of the old sheds and carriage houses that existed on the street in the past. This infill will also improve access to the second and third floors of buildings on Water Street.

- George Street at William's Lane, across from O'Keefe's Grocery (fig. 5.5.5) - Street oriented

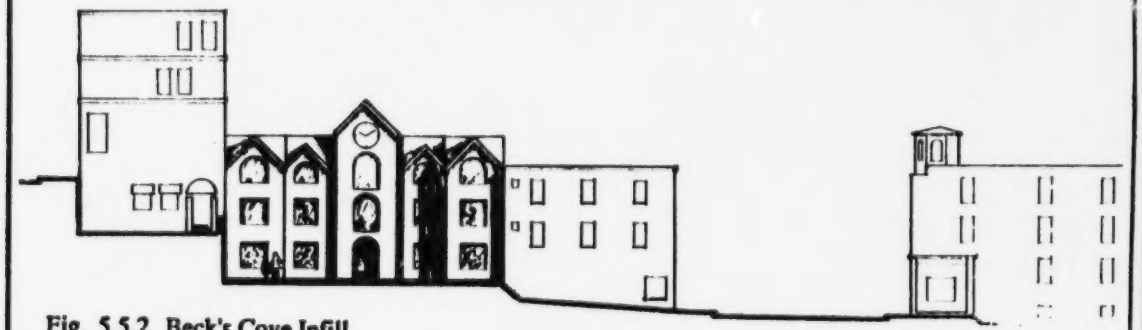


Fig. 5.5.2 Beck's Cove Infill

Fig. 5.5.3 George Street at Mahon's Lane - Rear of Footwear Supplies

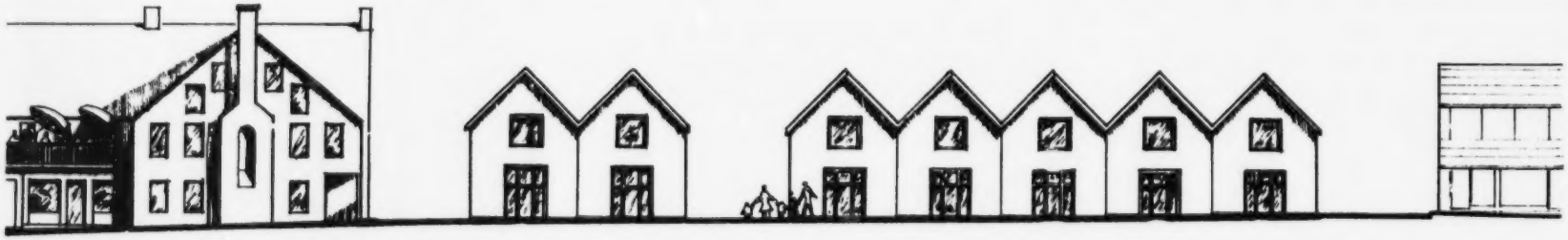


Fig. 5.5.4 George Street across from old City Hall site

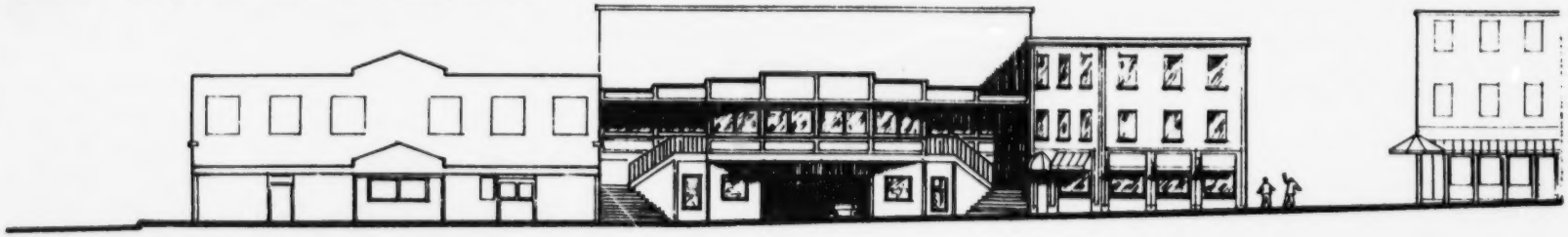


Fig. 5.5.5 Cinema and Williams Lane corner

Fig. 5.5.6 Adelaide at New Gower and George's Streets

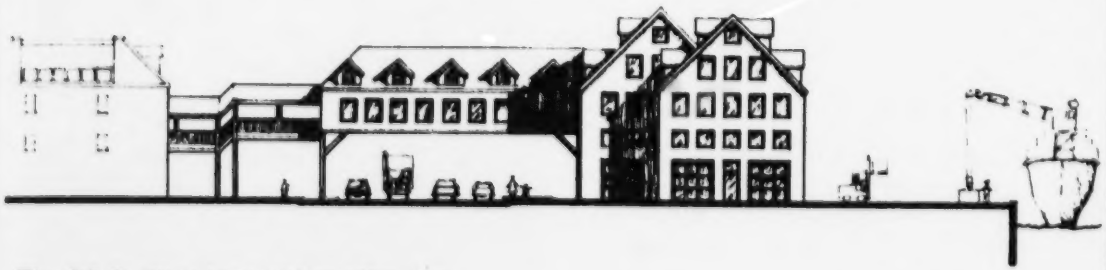


Fig. 5.5.7 Waterfront at Murray Premises

entertainment (Bar/Restaurant) activities. This building should respond to its location on the corner.

- George Street, North Side, near Sundance (fig. 5.5.5) A large site, with potential acess at two levels. There should be underground parking and the form should relate to the Sundance building upper part. A suggested use is as a small movie theatre with associated uses.

- Adelaide at George Street (Gulliver's Taxi Site) (fig. 5.5.6) - Street oriented taxi stand with residential on upper floors. It is desirable to infill this corner site to help define the intersection.

- The existing block from New Gower to George Street (fig 5.5.6) and Holdsworth Street to Adelaide Street, across from City Hall - Small urban park and office commercial (possibly city owned). Most appropriate site for overhead link across New Gower Street, important site because it will become a major gateway into the area from the West. Architecturally it should respond to the

overhead walkway and City Hall on one side while addressing the small scale intimate character of the pocket park and on George Street buildings.

- Waterfront at the Murray Premises - This project could address a number of concerns. The need to have people on the Waterfront and yet separated from the industrial activity, a link across Harbour Drive. In conjunction with the Murray Premises it could be a major activity area especially if a Fish and Produce Market were included, along with the Port's Corporation Offices and other retail.

This project could also serve as a prototype for several others on the Waterfront. (fig 5.5.7)

5.6 Engineering Aspects

Parking:

The terms of reference for the study required that no parking be provided on George St. After consideration, we feel that it is important that it be included. At present there are approximately 30 legal spaces and an equal number of "illegal" spaces. In the plan we show approximately 26 spaces including an underground garage associated with an infill project. The area cannot possibly be self sufficient in parking but it is important to have some spaces so that there is a perception that parking is available.

In the short term the existing situation will prevail. As the area develops and surrounding projects are completed, their parking will be daytime space for the main daytime users. It is important that this space be generally available for nighttime use.

In addition, there is a proposed parking garage planned to the west which will help the area.

Underground Services

No major work needs to be done. Cathch basins that are required for the new street surfacing can be hooked into the existing sewer.

Overhead Wiring

Overhead wiring along George Street, Beck's Cove and Bishop's Cove is very cluttered. Three options are presented to clean up the situation:

Option 1 - Place wires underground.

Underground wiring is the best solution visually, however, the cost is considerable. Estimates suggest it will cost $500,000.00 for Nfld. Light and Power and $500,000.00 for Newfoundland Telephone. These estimates are rather limited in that transformers and the cost to hook up to individual premises have not been calculated.

Option 2 - Prepare for future underground wires.

An alternative is to install conduit at the time the street is being reconstructed. Wires may be placed in the conduit at some later date.

Option 3 - Selective Underground Service

Install conduit in specific plan areas such as across Adelaide Street and clean up the overhead wires elsewhere throughout the study area.

The cost estimates for options 2 and 3 need to be determined.

5.7 Conclusion

The elements which have been shown in the design development are ideas that need to be expanded upon in actual execution. Individually they can change but collectively they provide an image for the area.

6. Implementation

1.0 Introduction

The process of implementation and realizing the benefits of the Retail Core Area Redevelopment Scheme will be gradual and staged over a number of years. The proposals outlined provide a means by which the general policies of the City's Municipal Plan may be translated into a detailed specific policy.

The proposals come to terms with the area in a manner that respects its historic and commercial designation as defined in the Municipal Plan. The proposals have been formulated to provide a sense of direction, enabling investment in the area to be made with confidence. In this respect the plan has five major functions. These are:

1) to bring local and detailed issues before the public

2) to encourage public and private interests to formulate a program that will strengthen the retail function of the entire Retail Core

3) to provide a basis for co-ordinating public and private development

4) to provide guidelines for physical improvements and act as the basis for development control

5) to form a detail basis for medium range budgeting

An important point to be stressed is that the proposed improvements have a basis other than beautification. The character and appearance of the area is beginning to be eroded in a very subtle way with the introduction of new developemnts on the perimeter. The area has been redesigned to recapture for downtown, the liveliness and activity on the street (at all times of the day and night) which makes the area comfortable and worthwhile being in. In this respect the improvements are proposed on the basis of making the area an attrractive, comfortable, convenient area to shop and be entertained. The retail function will be realigned and concentrated, access and circulation will be improved and pedestrian links will be established and/or strengthened.

6.1 Requirements for Success

In other jurisdictions across Canada much has been learned in designing and implementing downtown improvement schemes. An assessment of some of these projects revealed a number of points applicable to the situation in Downtown St. John's. These points are felt to be a key to the successful implimentation of the Development Scheme. These are:

1) Project management coordination through a corporate management structure.

2) Develop a process of strategic planning with a medium term outlook. The planning should be directed through clear objectives whereby performance can be monitored and corrective action taken where necessary.

3) Front end investment requirements should not overtake the capital resources available.

4) Painstaking attention should be given to phasing of projects to achieve an immediate visual effect.

5) Select projects that will quickly knit together important areas of the retail core.

6) Stage improvements as small projects in such a manner that they stand as a self supporting physical entity and are insulated from one phase to the next.

7) Housing should be incorporated throughout the retail core area in order to increased area use.

6.2 Management and Organizational Structure

The first prerequisite to the effective redevelopment of core area is to establish a management structure that coordinates the efforts of the City, the Downtown Development Corporation and Main Street Canada. In other jurisdictions accross Canada the corporate management model has proven to be most effective in that it has a clear set of objectives, develops a plan including broad strategies and specific programs for dealing with its competition. It allows for continual evaluation and updating of the objectives and programs. The model is most appropriate for downtown St. John's given the nature of change from land development the area is likely to experience in the next decade and the level of investment required to make the scheme work.

At the present time the responsibilities of the three groups are as follows:

The City

*Co-ordination of capital works
*Specialized Funding
*Development Control
*Land Acquisition

The D.D.C.

*Promotion
*Liaison with the city and Mainstreet

Main Street - Heritage Canada

*Organization
*Design Advise
*Promotion
*Economic Restructuring

The contributions and management of these groups needs to be critically reviewed at the outset. A development committee should be formed with representatives from the three groups to direct a review of the management requirements for the core area redevelopment. Questions have to be asked of four areas in the management of the redevelopment:

* Organization and staffing requirements?
* Programs?
* Budgeting and finance?
* Property management and policy development?

The answers to these questions will give a clear idea of where we are now and what our future needs are likely to be. Simultaneously a marketing strategy should be prepared by way of a detailed assessment of the market. The assessment must determine business opportunities. It must test the candidate activities proposed in this study as to their appropriateness. It must determine if the area can support the activity or business type. Is the candidate business type cost effective in terms of returns on investment, or are there other activities more appropriate? It is advisable that the review of the management requirements and the market be prepared by individuals with a proven track record in directing downtown projects.

These points should be addressed early on in order for the core area to be percieved as a community resource and to generate a willingness within the business community to make the financial committment for private renovation as a collective effort..

6.3 Priorities

Ordinarily management and marketing concerns are addressed prior to a physical design study, however, the deteriorated physical conditions primarily along George Street necessitated immediate attention, hence this study.

According to recognized authorities in downtown rehabilitation, a downtown striving for excellence will maximize its returns by an early focus on physical improvements.* The principal focus should be on streetscaping, rehabilitation of buildings and the upgrading of display and business merchandising. Then important objective is to communicate to the upblic that "something is different".

*Towards Excellence in Downtown Management - Peter Barnard Associates, Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1983.

6.4 Special Project Areas

Special project areas have been identified throughout the area.

The selection of these areas is made on the basis of achieving immediate visual effect, quickly knitting the area together within a cost framework that is acceptable to the public and private sectors. The sequencing of capital works projects should be directed to establishing a strong forcus to the area and linking George Street-Water Street with the Harbour along well defined pedestrian routes.

The following recommendations are made for areas which should be given priority in physical implementation.

A. The Development Committees efforts should be concentrated initially in the area extending from the old city hall site down to Water Street. This section of the study area is the most rundown, has established pedestrian links along the lane ways and presents in full opportunities to link Water Street and George Street through the exising buildings.

B. The new square and streetscape focusing on George Street should be designed to allow construction within the next twelve months.

C. A special program should be established to persuade the owners of the Water St. building which back onto George Street of the benefits of upgrading their property within the developemnt proposals outlined.

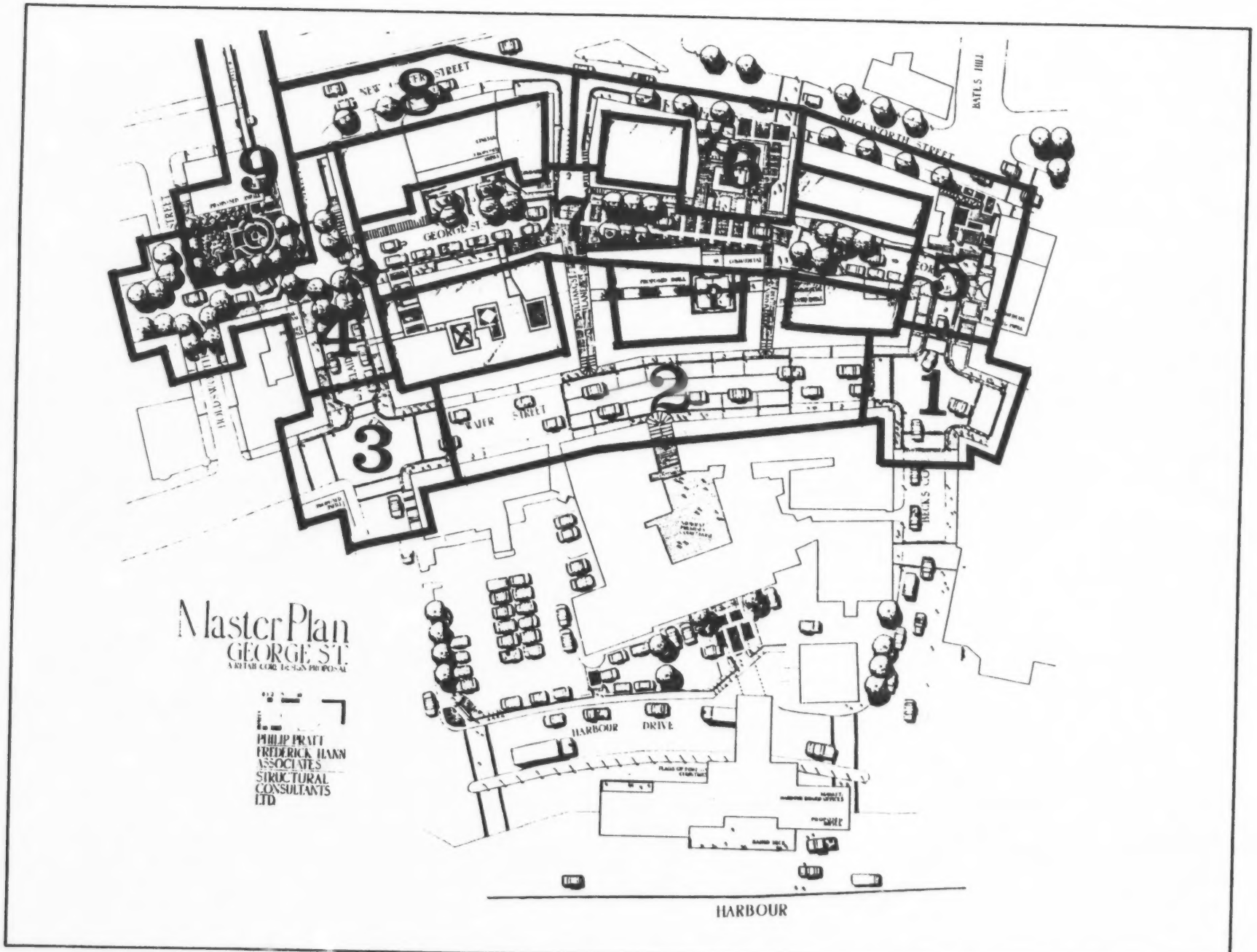
D. Water Street streetscape improvements in the section from Mahon's Lane to William's Lane should be directed toward sign control, facade cleanup. Capital Works should focus on sidewalk upgrading, new lighting and fixed awnings at the intersection of William's Lane and Mahon's Lane with Water Street and the entrance to the Murray Premises on Water Street.

E. Pedestrian links should be made with the Waterfront at Beck's and Bishop's Cove across Harbour Drive. Lighting on both sides of Harbour Drive should be installed to establish the visual link with the Harbour. Physical improvements should be made to the Murray Premises parking area to facilitate strong pedestrian access to the site and building.

F. The Municipal Pumping Station should be painted to blend with the Murray Premises. A graphic display should be mounted on the facade of the Pumping Station to represent the former appearance of the Waterfront and define the Murray Premises as a major gateway to the area.

G. A St. John's Information Centre should be established..

H. Discussions should take place with the St. John's Port Corporation Board of Directors and all interested parties regarding the construction of a building accross Harbour Drive for the Corporation's office requirements and a mix of retail-commercial activities including a fish market.


Master Plan
GEORGE ST
A RETAIL CORE DESIGN PROPOSAL
PHILIP PRATT
FREDERICK HANN
ASSOCIATES
STRUCTURAL
CONSULTANTS
LTD
GEORGE ST
HARBOUR DRIVE
HARBOUR
1
2
3
4
5
6
8
9

I. The Taxi Street

Zone Adelaide Street for the exclusive parking of taxis along both sides of the street. Construct the improvements to sidewalks and George St. intersections.

J. Water St. intersections at Bishop's and Beck's Cove are the main gateways to the area. Redevelop these intersections with the appropriate paving materials, signage and light standards.

K. Direct traffic flow "up" William's Lane during special functions such as St. John's Day celebrations, Saturday mornings or any time when the section of George St. east of William's Lane is to be used for civic functions.

L. City Hall Expansion - Pedestrian Skywalk & Park: Acquire the land bound by George Street, Adelaide Street, New Gower Street and Holdsworth Street for the City Hall Expansion, the pedestrian skywalk to City Hall and the small civic park.

M. Infill Cinema - Speciality Retai: Encourage the land owners and others to persue the concept of a theatre. Preliminary inclinations are that it could be a leasable project. Potential sources of funding exist for a project of this nature with the Federal Government, Department of Communications Cultural Initiatives Program. Capital assistance is possible for the construction, renovation or upgrading of theatres, concert halls, museums and galleries. The objective of theCultural Initiatives Program are

To provide greater public access to the professional performing and visual arts, museums and heritage collections, by developing a national network of facilities. Funds will also be provided to assist organizations in undertaking feasibility studies pertinent to capital projects.

Projects submitted for consideration must satisfy the following criteria:

- the applicant must be a Canadian non-profit incorporated organization or a municipal or regional government:

- the construction or renovation of the facility or the purchase of the equipment must have a direct and immediate bearing on the provision or the improvement of facilities for both the public and the artists involved;

- the applicant must demonstrate a provincial or territorial commitment to cost-sharing of the project;

-the applicant must confirm the funding sources available to meet the operating costs associated with the project.

6.5 Development Control

This aspect of the project is broadly concerned with the control of land uses, signage, the appearance of buildings and their effect on people and the core area in general. It is a specialized activity which more than likely will occupy a significant portion of time of a member of the management organization.

Development control decisions will be made against the backdrop of agreed policies and in this respect will be instrumental in securing the implementation on a day to day basis of those proposals contained within the development scheme.

Planning permission will be required for most "development" as defined in the Land Use Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, City of St. John's. Design guidelines have been prepared for commercial renovation and proposed infill, signage and building maintenance.

6.6 Budgeting and Finance

More important than the absolute budget level is the process of setting a budget. The budgeting and financial committments the city and the business community will have to make in this project will likely be a sensitive issue. The importance of carrying this out well cannot be over stressed. The factors to be addressed early in the implementation are as follows:

1. Establish a well-defined process for striking annual budgets.

2. Establish a clean financial system which controls and moniters expenditures.

3. Tailor the budget to both needs and resources.

The budget estimates as are shown in the following chart include the items of work required in the street and open space areas. Most of these are in the public domain. They do not include costs of renovations to buildings or private developments.

The costing is broken up into physical areas that relate to reasonable packages of work.

It must be emphasised that these figures are for preliminary budgeting only. They include overheads, profits and contingencies but are subject to variation with detailed design.

The item of overhead wiring is not included. Estimates for putting electric and telephone wires underground are approximately $1 million plus street work and work on individual buildings. A program of cleaning up the overhead utilities would be much more economical and could progress in stages.

AREA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	ITEM TOTAL
Hard Surface Landscaping										
Glasphalt	20,700.00	65,700.00	20,700.00	24,200.00	6,800.00		37,000.00			175,000.00
Granite	5,700.00	15,600.00	5,700.00	4,000.00	5,700.00	1,400.00				38,000.00
Sidewalks	35,700.00	88,800.00	35,700.00	59,600.00	56,400.00	31,900.00	109,400.00	24,900.00	10,000.00	452,000.00
Bomanite	4,200.00		5,100.00	9,000.00	22,000.00	35,400.00	77,700.00	11,800.00	62,400.00	227,000.00
Curb & Gutter							6,000.00	14,400.00		20,000.00
Steps					12,900.00	18,200.00				31,000.00
Fountain						60,000.00				60,000.00
Sub-Total	**66,000.00**	**170,000.00**	**67,000.00**	**96,000.00**	**103,000.00**	**146,000.00**	**230,000.00**	**51,000.00**	**72,000.00**	**1,004,000.00**
Ped. Overpass	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**360,000.00**	**360,000.00**
Planting										
Trees				50,400.00	7,200.00	12,600.00	28,800.00	9,000.00	16,200.00	124,000.00
Shrubs					700.00	1,800.00			3,000.00	5,000.00
Ground Cover					900.00	2,100.00			2,100.00	5,000.00
Sub-Total	**.00**	**.00**	**.00**	**50,000.00**	**8,000.00**	**16,000.00**	**28,000.00**	**9,000.00**	**21,000.00**	**134,000.00**
Lighting										
Single Street Lights		34,300.00		17,800.00	25,400.00	17,800.00	31,800.00	6,300.00	7,600.00	141,000.00
Quad Street Lamps	27,000.00	12,000.00	27,000.00			12,000.00			6,000.00	84,000.00
Wall Mounted		4,800.00								4,000.00
Sub-Total	**27,000.00**	**51,000.00**	**27,000.00**	**17,800.00**	**25,400.00**	**29,000.00**	**31,000.00**	**6,300.00**	**13,000.00**	**229,000.00**
Street Furniture										
Benches							10,500.00		4,200.00	14,000.00
Bollards	20,400.00	25,700.00	15,800.00	37,600.00	17,800.00	16,500.00	36,300.00			170,000.00
Planters			800.00		4,100.00	4,100.00	4,100.00	1,200.00	4,100.00	18,000.00
Trash Receptacles	1,000.00	1,500.00	1,000.00	2,500.00	2,000.00	2,500.00	3,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	15,000.00
Tree Grates				20,100.00	2,800.00	5,000.00	11,500.00	3,600.00	6,400.00	49,000.00
Tree Guards				3,100.00	400.00	700.00	1,800.00	500.00	1,000.00	7,000.00
Info Kiosks							4,300.00			4,000.00
Telephone Kiosks					2,500.00	2,500.00	5,100.00		2,500.00	12,000.00
35' Flagpoles					3,200.00	3,200.00			3,200.00	9,000.00
Fencing & Railing					26,900.00	26,900.00				53,000.00
Sub-Totals	**21,000.00**	**27,000.00**	**17,000.00**	**63,000.00**	**59,0000.00**	**61,000.00**	**76,000.00**	**6,000.00**	**22,000.00**	**357,000.00**
Total Each Area Approximately	**114,000.00**	**248,000.00**	**111,000.00**	**228,000.00**	**197,000.00**	**254,000.00**	**367,000.00**	**72,000.00**	**490,000.00**	**2,084,000.00**

Note: Figures for construction costs only. Design fees not included.
Design fees will be based upon the fee schedules of the respective professional associations.
All totals rounded down to the nearest thousand dollards.

Fig. 6.4.1 Cost Estimates Project Area

6.7 Summary of Major Recommendations:

1. The City of St. John's City Council should review and adopt the design plan as soon as possible. The study provides sufficient background for the city to designate the area and set the boundaries as a "special assessment area".

2. A Core Area Development Committee should be set up to provide interim management of the implementation.

3. The City of St. John's City Council should make an immediate and sustained financial committment to get the project rolling.

4. The Core Area Development Committee should undertake to prepare an assessment of the Management and Organizational Requirements for the redevelopment project. A marketing study should assess the business opportunities for the area. Once completed, establish active liason with the real estate community to focus on potential clients.

5. The Development Committees efforts should be concentrated initially in the area extending from the old City Hall site down to Water Street. This section of the study area is the most rundown, has established pedestrian links along the laneways and presents in full opportunities to link Water Street and George Street through the existing buildings.

6. The new square and streetscape focusing on George Street should be designed to allow construction within the next twelve months.

7. Set up a special program for absentee owners to persuade them of the benefits of upgrading their property and otherwise participating in the future of the area in which they have a stake.

8. The St. John's City Council should undertake to immediately implement controls in accordance with the suggested guidelines for exterior rehabilitation, sign control and new construction.

9. Efforts should be made to consolidate areas of similar styles by returning inappropriately renovated buildings to their original styles according to the guidelines.

10. Discussions should start between interested parties and the St. John's Port Corporation regarding the development of the Waterfront opposite the Murray Premises.

11. Where not already implemented, electrical and telephone wires should be relocated and organized as other works are being undertaken.

12. Residential use in and around the areas should be encouraged through the cities urban living departments and other means.

13. Development of parking facilities should be encouraged with provision for daytime/nightime use.

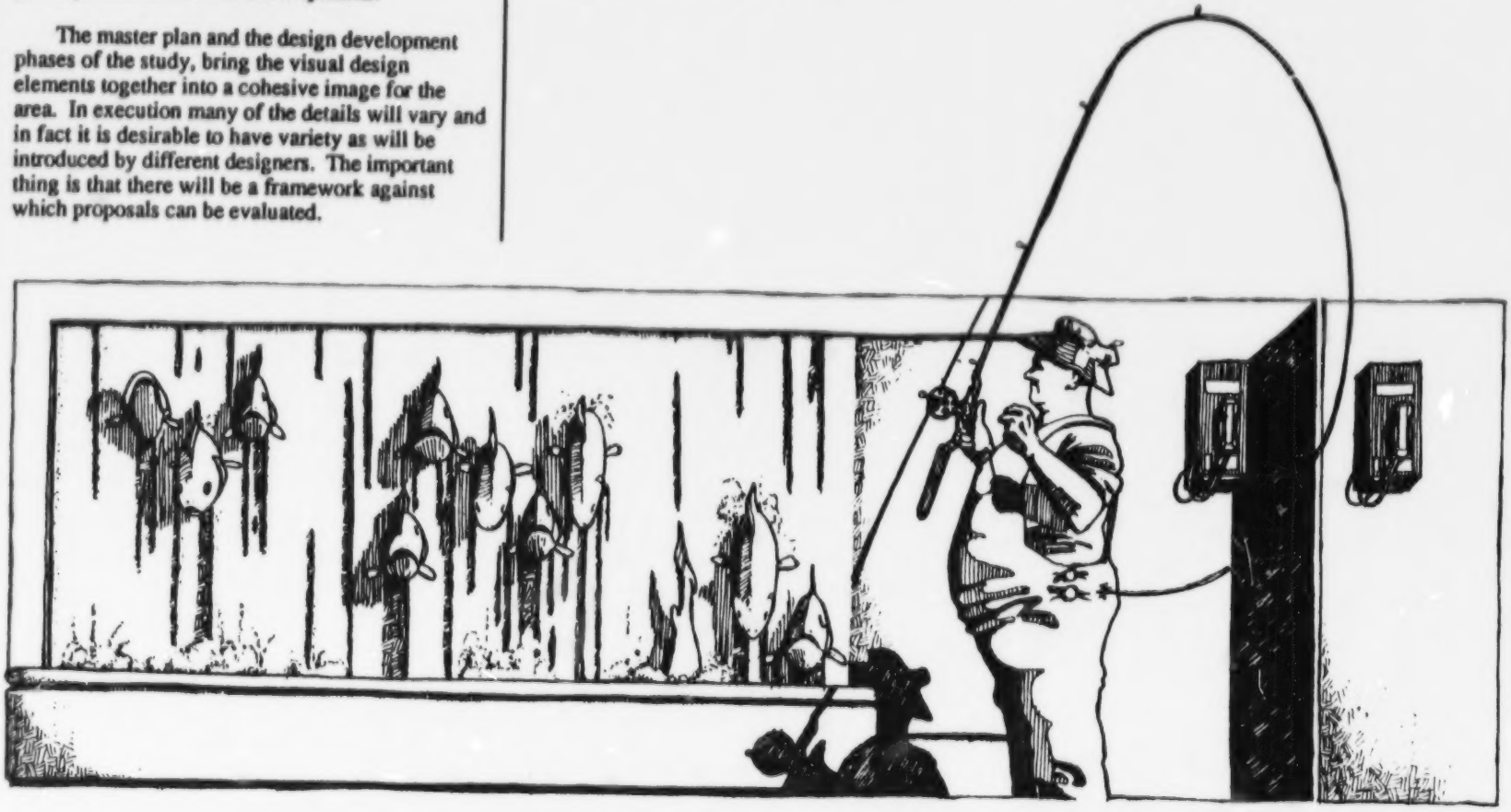
7. Conclusion

7.0 In many ways the results of the design study are not surpirsing. The street upgrading, urban design elements, renovation guidelines, suggestion for linkages, are all things that have been suggested previously. What is a bit surprising is the level of enthusiasm with which the suggestions have been received by businesses in the area. In particular several property owners have expressed interest and even suggested their participation in the infill developments.

The master plan and the design development phases of the study, bring the visual design elements together into a cohesive image for the area. In execution many of the details will vary and in fact it is desirable to have variety as will be introduced by different designers. The important thing is that there will be a framework against which proposals can be evaluated.

The physical design which is the main emphasis of this report is only one part of the process. Organization is another. The section on implementation discusses some of the implications and the participation of the various groups in the realization of the area's potential.

The area, be it known as the George St. Area, Retail Core Area, Beck's Cove Area, or whatever, has a tremendous potential to be a major attraction for residents and visitors. It is hoped that this design study will be the first step.



Appendix

- Excerpt from design project by Paul Blackwood pertaining to buildings located on the corners of Water Street, Beck's Cove, Mahon's Lane and George Street. The project was titled "Yellow Belly Corner 1847 - 1985".

- Excerpt from the St. John's Heritage Conservation Area Study: Sample studies Section pertaining to #300 Water Street.

- Large scale drawings of area buildings elevations and sections and area maps (attached, limited number available).

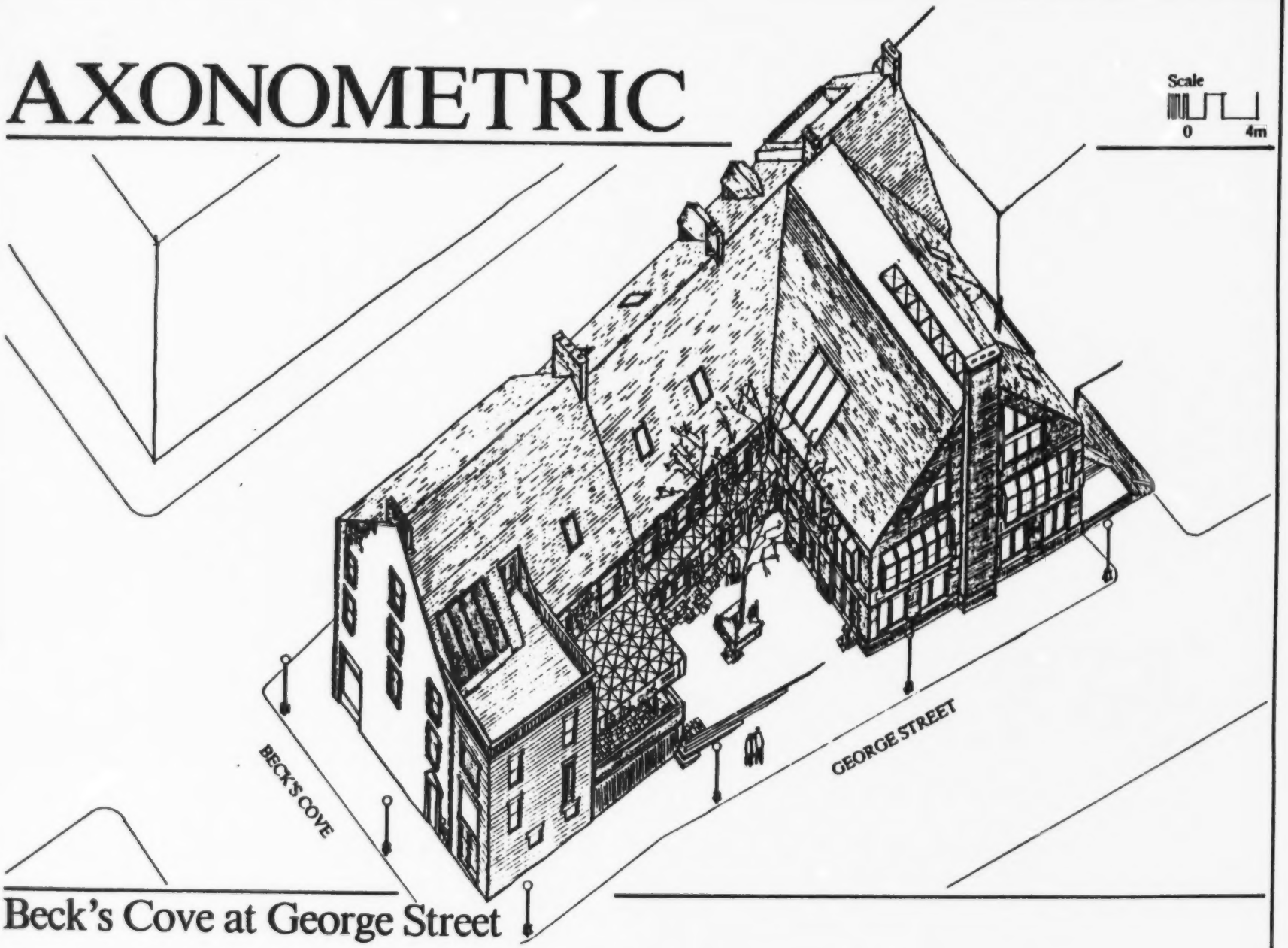
PERSPECTIVE

Looking East on Water Street

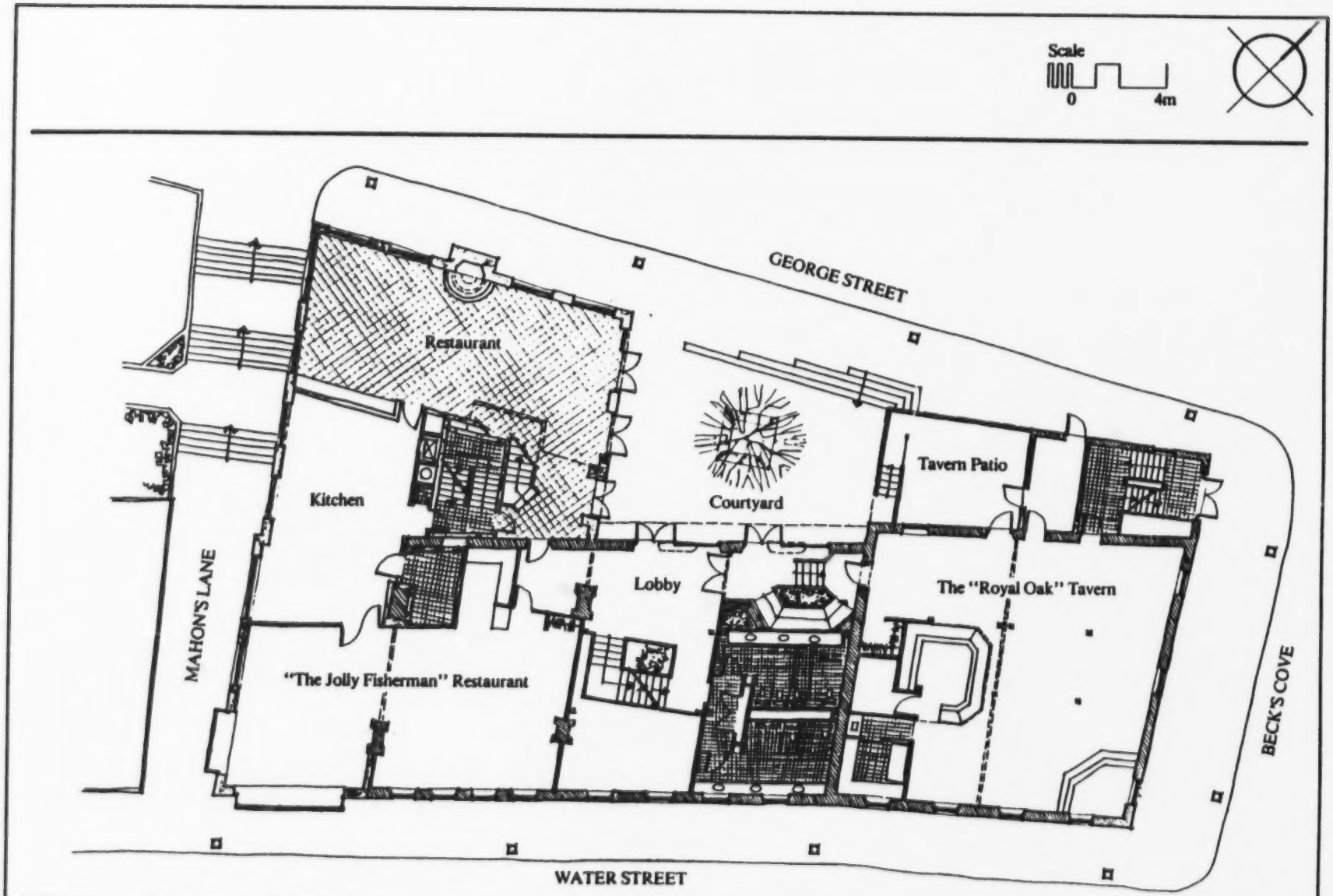
Scale
0 4m

Mahon's Lane

AXONOMETRIC



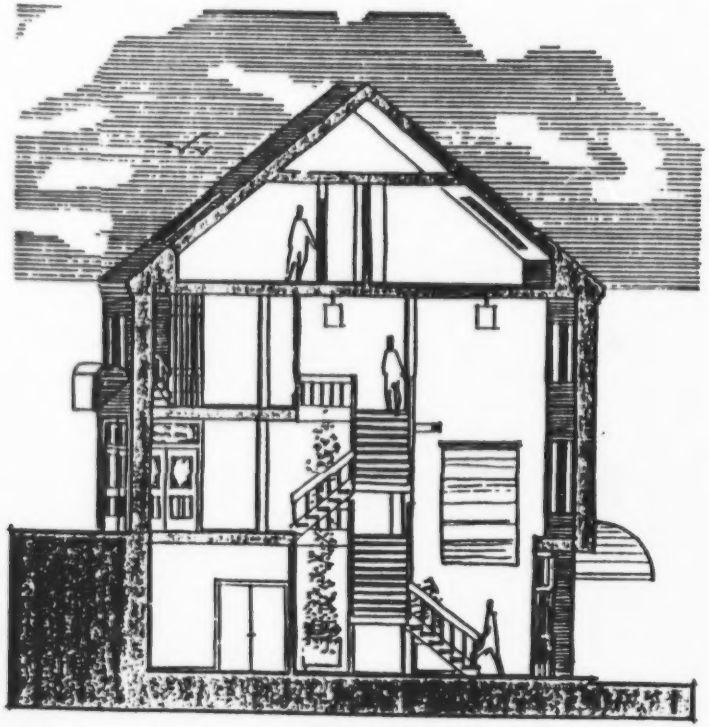
Beck's Cove at George Street



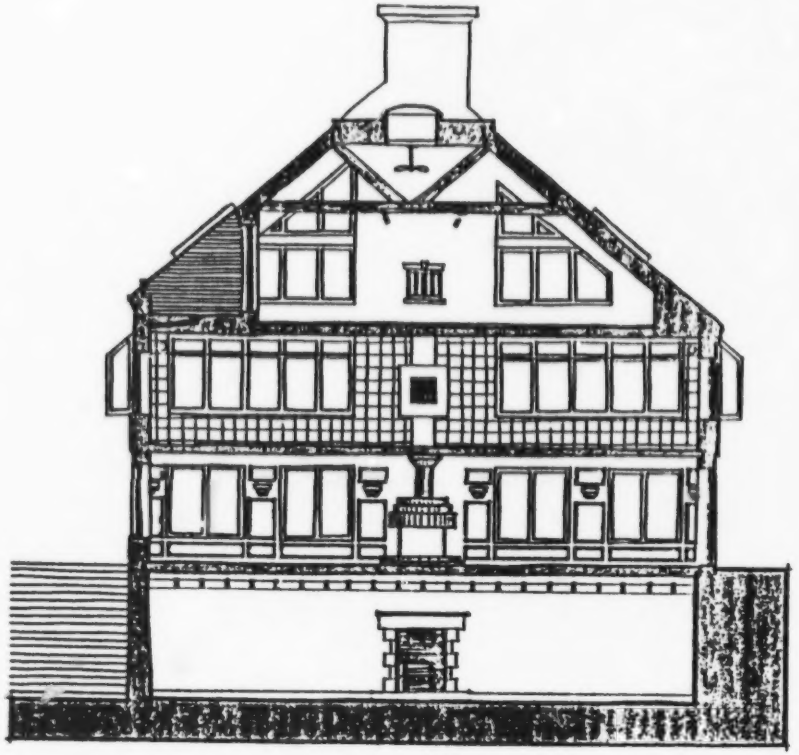
George Street Level

Scale

0 4m



Section taken through Lobby



Section taken through New Addition

3.0 300 Water Street

This building at 300 Water Street was constructed after the fire of 1846. It is an integral part of a range of buildings that survived the fire of 1892, and was given a second priority ranking.

3.1 Description

Although it appears as one building from the exterior, it is in fact two sections divided by a rather substantial brick firewall.

Originally the ground floor of this building was used for commercial purposes; the upper two and a half floors provided rather spacious living accommodations. This tradition of combined use has disappeared, leaving much of the space unoccupied.

In recent years, the building has been used for commercial retail purposes with the upper floors used for storage and office space. However, it appears that at no time did the building have as efficient a use as when it was used for commercial and residential purposes.

The building is three and a half storeys high with the traditional nineteenth-century hip roof. The attic space contained is quite substantial, with ceiling clearance of at least 8

feet and a width of 18 feet. Materials of construction include a mixture of brick and stone as interior bearing with a wood frame floor and roof system. Except for some settlement in the front wall and slight floor unevenness, the structure is in good to fair condition. All wood timbers appear to be in good condition with no significant evidence of rot.

3.2 Rehabilitation Proposals

In order to determine the economic feasibility of rehabilitating 300 Water Street two uses were investigated.

Proposal 1

The first proposal was to upgrade the building to accommodate retail commercial on the ground floor, office space on the second and third floors, studio space (artists, photographers) on the attic floor. This is basically a continuation of present use except that available space is utilized to its maximum extent. Also, the proposal endeavors to meet Building Code requirements, especially with respect to fire exits and separations.

Proposal 2

The second rehabilitation proposal uses the upper floors for residential purposes and the ground floor for retail commercial. This proposal reflects the traditional use of the building.

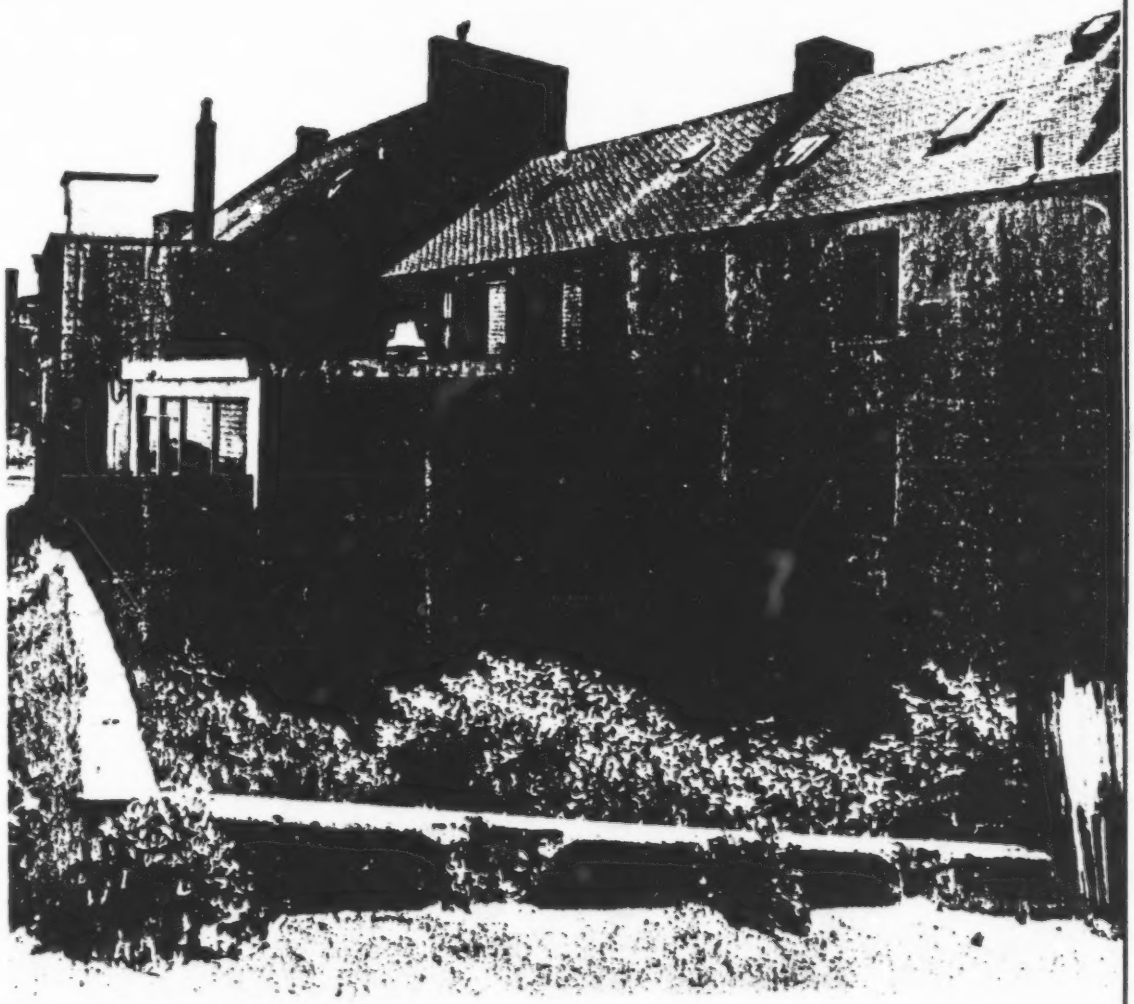
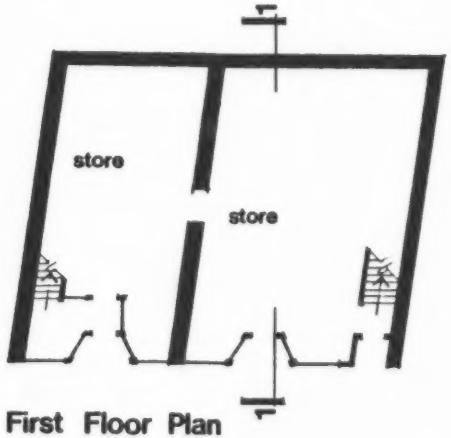
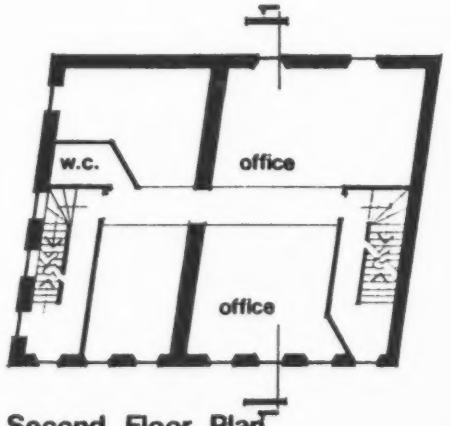


Figure 109 Rear of 300 Water Street.

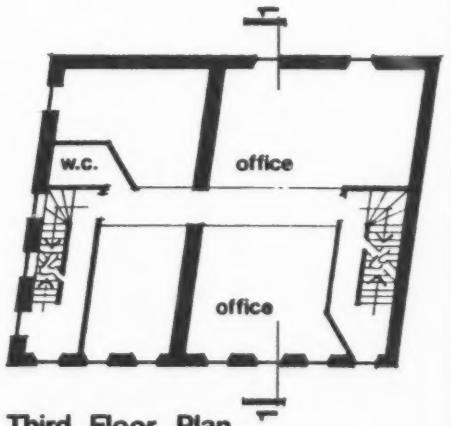
Proposal 1



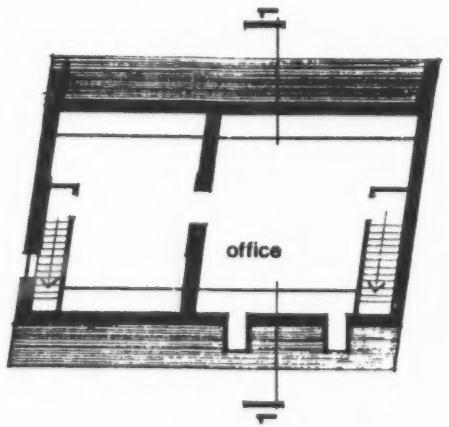
First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

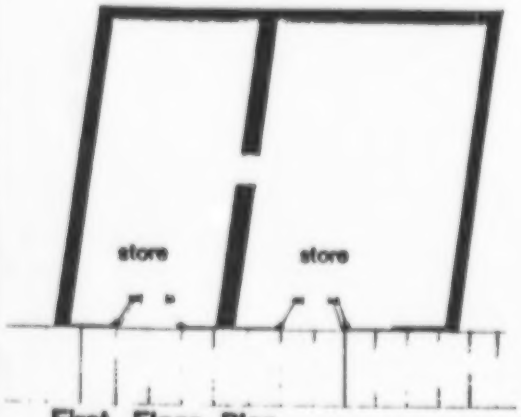


Fourth Floor Plan (Studio)

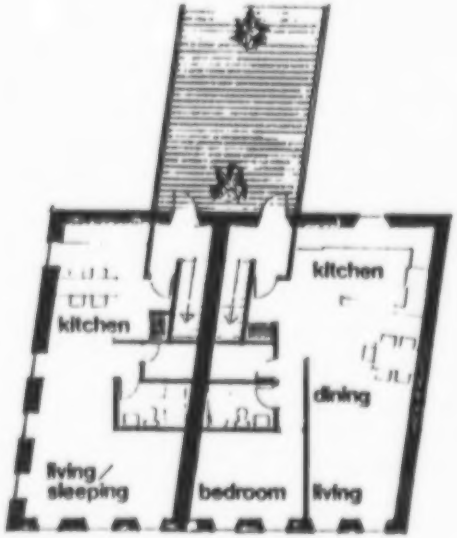
Section 1 – 1

Front Elevation

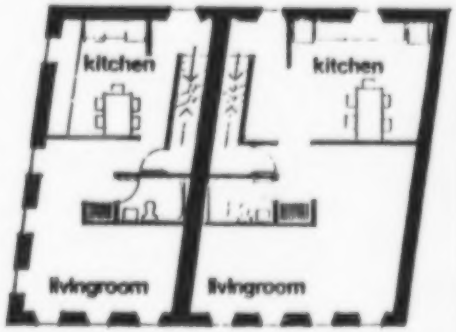
Proposal 2



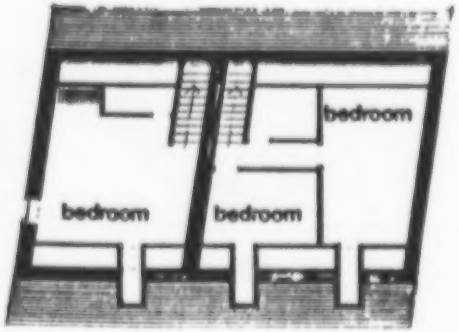
First Floor Plan



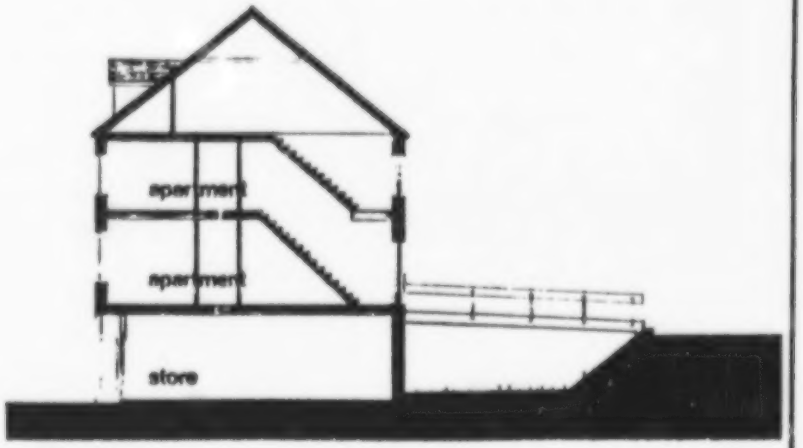
Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan



Fourth Floor Plan



Section

Bibliography

Alexander C. "A Pattern Language - Towns, Buildings, Construction" Oxford University Press, New York 1977

Arnold, Henry F. "Trees in Urban Design", Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1980

Blackwood, Paul. "Yellow Belly Corner 1847 - 1985", 1985

City of St. John's. "Land Use Zoning and Subdivision Regulations" March 27, 1985

City of St. John's. "Downtown Transportation and Parking Study" DelCan, September 1982

City of St. John's. "Heritage Area Development Study, Warren and Hawes Limited, K. Paul & Associates and Barlow & Associates, May 1981

City of St. John's. "Municipal Plan" July, 1984

Cullen, Gordon."The Concise Townscape" The Architectural Press 1971

Cutler, Lawrence and Sherrie. "Recycling Cities for People - The Urban Design Process", Cohners Books International, Inc. 1976

Design Council and the Royal Town Planning Institute. "Streets Ahead", Whitney Library of Design, New York, 1979.

Hall, Edward T. "The Hidden Dimension", Anchor Books, Garden City, New York, 1969

Hickey, Lana. "George Street, Changing with the Times" from Newfoundland Lifestyle

Jacobs, Jane. "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1961

Journal of Industrial Aerodynamics, 1977

Lynch, Kevin. "A Theory of Good City Form" The MIT Press, 1981

Landphair, Harlow C. and Klatt, Fred Jr. "Landscape Architecture Construction" Elsevier, New York, 1979

Lynch, Kevin. "Site Planning" Second Edition, The MIT Press, 1971

National Trust for Historic Preservation. "National Main Street Centre - Training Program", 1981.

Olgyay, Victor. "Design with Climate" Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1963

O'Neill, P. "The Oldest City - The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland" Press Porcepic, Erin, Ontario, 1975

Rutledge, Albert J. "Anatomy of a Park", McGraw - Hill Book Company, 1971

Sheppard, Burt and Associates and Arends and Associates. "St. John's Heritage Conservation Area Study" December 1976

Simonds, John Ormsbee. "Earthscape - A Manual of Environmental Planning", McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978

Wiedenhoeft, Ronald. "Cities for People - Practical Measures for Improving Urban Environments", Von Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981

Whyte, William H. "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces" The Conservation Foundation, Washington, D.C. 1980

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the assistance of the following in the preparation of this Design Study

Steering Committee
- Deputy Mayor Shannie Duff
- Councillor Jim Fagan
- Geoff Levitz
- Mike Donovan
- Frank Power
- Tony Dejong
- Arvo McMillan
- Jim Finn
- Art Cheeseman

Kai Bath

Ray MacIssac

Tom Horricks

Pat Thompson

Business people in the area

The Retail Core Design Study was prepared by:

Philip Pratt, Architect
- Philip Pratt
- Paul Blackwood
- Gordon Genge
- Edwyn Pratt

Fred Hann and Associates
- Fred Hann
- Michael Sraga

Charles H. Henley
- Charlie Henley

Structural Consultants Limited
- Dave Burt
- Lloyd Short